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CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

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CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

BY

THE BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL,
THE DEAN OF RIPON,
THE ARCHDEACON OF SOUTHWARK,
CANON HOARE,
PREBENDARY EDMONDS,
THE REV. H. C. G. MOULE,
THE REV. SIR EMILIUS LAURIE,
THE REV. J. W. BARDSLEY, AND
THE REV. GEORGE EVERARD.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHRIST OUR PROPITIATION.—By the Rev. EDWARD HOARE, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells, and Honorary Canon of Canterbury . . 3

CHRIST THE LORD BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING.—By the Rev. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A., Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge 21

CHRIST IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.—By the Rev. J. W. BARDSLEY, M.A., Vicar of Huddersfield 31

CHRIST THE ASCENDED LORD.—By the Ven. JOHN RICHARDSON, D.D., Archdeacon of Southwark . 51

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—By the Rev. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A., Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge . . . . . I. 69

II. 81

III. 93

IV. 107

CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL OF THE WORKSHOP.—By the Rev. Sir EMILIUS LAURIE, Bart., B.D. . . 121

PAGE

CHRIST IN THE SICK ROOM.—By the Right Rev. J. C. RYLE, D.D., Lord Bishop of Liverpool . . 139

CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S FRIEND.—By the Very Rev. W. R. FREMANTLE, D.D., Dean of Ripon . . 151

CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S COMPANION.—By the Rev. GEORGE EVERARD, M.A., Vicar of Christ Church, Dover 165

CHRIST THE COMING JUDGE.—By the Rev. W. J. EDMONDS, B.D., Rector of High Bray, and Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral 179

CHRIST OUR PROPITIATION.

By the REV. EDWARD HOARE, M.A.,
Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells, and Honorary Canon of Canterbury

CHRIST OUR PROPITIATION.

"He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 *John* ii. 2.

IT is quite impossible that any person with eternity before him should be called to consider a more important subject than that of the present paper—the great propitiation made for us in the covenant of God. I desire, therefore, to speak of it under the deepest sense of my own responsibility, and with the earnest prayer for the guiding mind of the Holy Spirit, that so I may not only be kept from error, but enabled also to say that which may be of lasting service to those who are anxious for the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus. The propitiation made by our Lord Jesus Christ lies at the foundation of the whole system of Christianity, so that a weakness there involves a weakness everywhere; and if there is any undermining of this great foundation fact, it is time that we

should very seriously consider the words of the Psalmist, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

I. By propitiation is meant the full and complete satisfaction of the claims of the law on the sinner by the infliction of the law's penalty on the Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner's substitute; and our first business will be to consider the principle in which the whole originates. This principle is, that the authority of law must be maintained by the lawgiver, and that when the law has been broken, the sentence of the law must be carried into effect. We all know in common life what utter confusion is sure to follow when the law is defied by those who ought to obey, and allowed to lapse by those whose place it is to maintain it. If law is not maintained, it can only lead to anarchy. Thus the universal principle of law is that expressed in 2 Sam. xxiii. 3: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

But if law is maintained, it will lead in many cases to a conflict between law and love. There must have been just such a conflict in the mind of Brutus when his sons were convicted of con-

spiracy against the republic. In that case, law said they must die, but love must have said, "Let them live." Law said, "Condemn," and love must have said, "Have mercy." It is perfectly easy to understand the awful conflict which must have raged in the father's heart, and the terrible struggle when he ordered their execution.

We have a similar illustration of this conflict between law and love in the case of David. When Absalom had murdered his brother Amnon, he fled to Geshur, and there remained for three years in banishment. Then arose the conflict in David's mind beween law and love. He was comforted concerning Amnon, and he loved Absalom, so that he longed to have him back again. "The soul of King David longed," or "was consumed," "to go forth unto Absalom." Love, therefore, would have restored him, but law forbade his restoration. David was king, and therefore responsible for the administration of law. He was bound to uphold the righteousness of his government, and not to allow it to be broken down through the tenderness of a father's heart. He was com-

pelled, therefore, to keep Absalom in banishment at the very time that his own soul was consumed by the tender love he felt towards him.

Now, cannot we believe in exactly the same conflict between law and love in the mind of a perfectly holy God? There is in Him a righteousness infinitely more righteous, and a love infinitely more tender, than was ever known in man; and can any one be surprised either that His law cannot be set aside, or that His love yearns over the sinner even at the very time that He passes His own just sentence on the sin? People speak of the punishment of sin as if it were fierce, cruel, and vindictive; but it may be a stern necessity imposed on a tender heart by the righteous claims of a violated law. There is nothing vindictive in the judge when he passes sentence on a murderer, or in the Home Secretary when he signs the warrant for the execution. Both of them are simply maintaining the law; and this they are bound to do, however true their sorrow or tender their compassion. And why should it be thought a strange thing if there is the same combination

of attributes in God? He is at the head of the whole universe. We know not how many worlds are under His control, and watching His government. There are, beyond all doubt, millions of millions of living beings dependent on His rule; and are presumptuous men to ascribe it to a want of love in Him if He does not allow His law to be played with at their pleasure? So far from its indicating any want of love, I can understand that the most unloving thing He could possibly do would be to give a loose rein to the violation of law. The tender compassion of a feeling heart might urge that no notice should be taken of transgression; but the imperative claim of a righteous and merciful government would absolutely require that the Judge of All should never make light of sin.

Now, then, we are brought face to face with the great difficulty that has called forth the Gospel, viz., this: In what way can the law be vindicated, and yet the sinner who has broken it be saved? There is a very remarkable passage in the words of the woman of Tekoah, when she went to David respecting the restor-

ation of Absalom, in which she said of God, God does not "respect any person: yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14). According to that statement, He shows no partiality; but yet without partiality He has contrived a plan by which the offender may be forgiven. What, then, is this plan? What the means which He has devised in order that His banished be not expelled? This plan is propitiation. It is none other than that proposed by Judah, when, having undertaken to be surety for Benjamin, he said to Joseph (Gen. xliv. 33), "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren." His proposal was, that there should be an act of substitution; that Benjamin, in whose sack the cup was found, should be free, and that he himself, against whom no charge was laid, should be bondman in his place. So, in His boundless grace and mercy, our righteous God gave the Son to be bondsman in our place, and the Son accepted the suretyship and suffered. Thus the law has been vindicated and the sin punished, while at

the same time the love is satisfied and the sinner set free. This is what is meant by propitiation; this is the means which God has devised; and the effect of it, according to St. Paul (Rom. iii. 26), has been "To declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." He is just, therefore, and not one jot or one tittle of the law is allowed to pass unfulfilled; but He is still the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, for every one that accepts the representation of that blessed Saviour is in Him perfectly safe.

I am, of course, perfectly aware that there are those who reject this doctrine of substitution, and others who, while they accept it, see in it difficulties which they find it hard to explain. I am not about to study now either the reasons for rejection or the difficulties; but simply to point out that it is the one Divine plan which is taught throughout the Scriptures.

It was prefigured in type, as in all the sacrifices of the Levitical typical system; and pre-eminently in the type of the scapegoat (Lev. xvi. 21), where it is said, "Aaron shall lay both

his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat;" in which case the defilement of the people's sin was so completely transferred to the scapegoat that the man who led the goat into the wilderness was defiled by the contact, and was required to wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water before he was permitted to return into the camp.

It was predicted in prophecy, as, for example, by Isaiah when he said (Isa. liii. 6), "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." I have met with the endeavour to explain away that passage, as if it meant that the iniquity of man reached its climax in the crucifixion; but such an abortive attempt is a conclusive proof that there is no real way of evading the clear testimony to the Divine imputation to the Sin-bearer of the sins of those who had gone astray after the way of their own hearts.

So it was taught by the Apostles.

By St. Paul when he said (Gal. iii. 13),

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

By St. Peter when he said (1 Pet. iii. 18), "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

By St. John (1 John iv. 10): "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And, above all, by the mysterious conduct of our Lord Himself as His death was drawing near, which, I do not hesitate to affirm, can be explained on no other supposition. There is no disputing the fact that the death of our blessed Saviour was not an example of a peaceful deathbed. There have been thousands of His people who have met their last hour in far greater peace than He did. They have been perfectly happy, resting peacefully in the arms of Him who loved them from eternity, while He was bowed down in mental agony. In the garden on the evening before His death He

sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and pleaded with God that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him; and even on the cross He gave utterance to the marvellous cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" You cannot explain the difference by the severity of His physical suffering, for many of the martyrs have suffered much more pain than He did. Nor can we for one moment suppose that He was forsaken in consequence of any fault in Himself or any unfaithfulness in God. The only possible explanation is, that there was a transfer of guilt; that, as our substitute, He took the place of the guilty, and was treated accordingly; that "He was wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities," that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," and that "with His stripes we are healed." Thus, by that cry of His we are brought to the conclusion so well expressed by Hooker when he said, "I must take heed what I say; but the Apostle saith, 'God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the

very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom ; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered ; that God hath made Himself the {son / sin} of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God."

II. This, then, being, the principle, there are three great concluding truths to be for ever written on our memories and hearts.

(1) *The Divine propitiation is complete.* The whole, and every part, is completed for ever. In the typical sacrifices there were two parts in each typical propitiation—the death of the substitute, and the offering, or presentation, of the blood before one of the altars, or the mercy seat. The atonement was not completed by the death alone, but it was necessary that the death should be followed up by the presentation of the blood.

Now, in the Divine propitiation both parts have been completed. The one sacrifice has been once offered, and the whole is finished. The blood was shed on Calvary, and sprinkled

or presented, when "by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Some people speak of a continued offering of the one finished sacrifice, but this is contrary to Scripture, for if there were a continuation of the offering, there must be a repetition of the death, as we read Hebrews ix. 25, 26, "Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others. For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world." The death and the offering were two parts of the one transaction, and the whole of that transaction was complete when He rose from the dead, and was accepted as the beloved Son completely free from the killing guilt of imputed sin. The burden was then gone, our representative was free, having "made there," and made there completely, "by the one oblation of Himself once offered," not merely once put to death, "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

(2) *The Divine propitiation is final.* If there

were the possibility of any repetition, there is no room left for it. We sometimes hear of what is called "the sacrifice of the Mass." If by that were meant simply the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving from loving hearts full of thankfulness for their acceptance through the finished atonement, we might dislike the phrase, although we could not object to the doctrine. But when it is taught that the Lord's Supper is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, with our whole soul we protest against it as contrary to Scripture, and as a virtual denial of the perfection of the Divine propitiation. Do we not read (Heb. x. 18), "Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin"? If, therefore, remission is granted according to the covenant of God, if we are enjoying His promise, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," and if, according to verse 14, "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," what place is there for any further propitiatory offering of any kind whatever? Who can whiten that which is already white as snow? Who can perfect that which God Himself has already perfected?

Who can, by any means whatever, either repeat, or continue, or perpetuate an offering which God Himself has pronounced to be once for all, as in the words (Heb. x. 12), "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God"?

(3) And this brings me to my last point—*The Divine propitiation is sufficient.* By this I mean that it is so complete and perfect in the covenant of God that those who are saved by it are made partakers of a complete reconciliation. There are many persons who appear to be satisfied with what I may call a partial reconciliation. They hope they are not in the position of an altogether unforgiven sinner, but still they dare not accept the position of one whose every sin has been blotted out, and to whom there is no barrier in the way of a full, free, unfettered enjoyment of the love of God. They are not unlike Absalom when he returned from Geshur and remained three years at Jerusalem without being permitted to see his father's face. In his case there was only a partial restoration. David could not see his way to a complete relaxation of law, for nothing had been

done to satisfy it; so he adopted a compromise which satisfied neither love nor law. He allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but did not allow him to see his face. Now the position of Absalom when he returned to Jerusalem was very much that of a multitude of those who have not practically received the blessed truth of a complete, final, and sufficient propitiation. They are not as he was when in Geshur, for they are in the midst of religious life as he was in Jerusalem, but they are not fully restored, they have not seen the face of the King, and their Father has not kissed them. The result is, that their religion is one of little more than anxiety, and they begin to think that it was almost better with them when they were altogether in the world. But this is not the result of an all-sufficient Divine propitiation. There is nothing of this half-and-half character in our Heavenly Father's provision for us. "His love unknown has broken every barrier down." When our blessed Saviour took on Himself the burden of our sin, He took the whole; and when He paid the price, He paid the whole. He did not leave His work half done. So the

whole is taken out of the way, being nailed to His cross, and there is no barrier left between the restored sinner and the Father in heaven. The veil of separation has been rent from the top to the bottom, and, as the curse of all sin has been completely, and for ever, borne, it is the privilege of every soul that is in Christ Jesus to approach the mercy-seat of our most holy God with the same peaceful, loving, filial trust that he would have felt if he had never known sin. Thus it is that we may realize the words of St. John, "Because, as He is, so are we in this world."

CHRIST THE LORD BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING.

By the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, M.A.,
Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

CHRIST THE LORD BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."—*Rom.* xiv. 8.

FEW lines of Scriptural inquiry at the Easter season are more rich in suggestion and blessing than the study of the mentions of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus in the Epistle to the Romans. They form a considerable group of passages, scattered over the Epistle so as to occur in just eight out of the sixteen chapters. They are always incidental, never dealing (as St. Paul addresses himself to do in 1 Cor. xv.) with the proof of the event, but none the less therefore contributing all-important evidence to that proof. For such passing but joyful allusions to this great

foundation of the Christian's peace and hope, made at a time when living memories of the date referred to were alike multitudinous and vivid, form by their very manner the most impressive of testimonies, when we study them (so to speak) with our whole nature, and in sympathy with the attitude and circumstances of the writer and the first readers. These allusions, again, are always doctrinal. Each is made for the sake of spiritual and eternal truth. The Apostle brings in the resurrection always to prove, with its deep and glorious logic, with a dialectic which rises direct from the miracle to its everlasting significance, some inestimable point of truth about the believer, or about the Lord, or about both at once.

Among these passages we take the last in the Epistle (Rom. xiv. 8, 9).

We do not attempt to examine the verses in detail throughout, or to say a word about their context. It is enough to remember that the great aim of the Apostle is to bring home to the Christian believer, as such, the fact of his belonging to Jesus Christ, as personal property; belonging, as vassal to sovereign; and this not

only by way of might, but by way of right. The Lord has not only seized him as Conqueror. He has done so; but he has also, and antecedently, acquired him as Redeemer. He has died for us, and risen again. In the virtue, in the merits, in the claims, of that finished work of atonement and of victory, He has entered, from the point of view of eternal right and law, upon the absolute possession of His people as His property.

One manifest spiritual lesson of such a passage we point to, but do not enlarge upon. It is a lesson which, God be thanked, is being learned with a special attention, earnestness, and self-application by ever-growing numbers of His people in our day; the lesson that our redemption is not only from condemnation and its eternal issues of woe, but into a relation to the Redeemer which is through and through a relation of property, of blessed servitude by purchase, of our being now and for ever, and in all things, in our whole selves, and in all their circumstances, "not our own." This is the first and most obvious message of the passage. And its very prominence, both in Scripture,

and in the present thought of believers, shall for this once allow us to do no more than refer to it and pass on.

The message of this passage to which we call attention here is a less obvious one, but one of precious worth, and one which, in the glorious light thrown by Easter upon the world beyond the grave, seems to us peculiarly appropriate to the hour. The Apostle four times over in this short paragraph makes mention of death, and of the dead. "No man (of us) dieth to himself;" "Whether we die, we die unto the Lord;" "Whether we die, we are the Lord's;" "That He might be Lord of the dead." And this last sentence, with its mention, not of the dying, but of the dead, reminds us that the reference in them all is to the Christian's relation to his Lord, not only in the hour of death, but in the state after death. It is not only that Jesus Christ, as the Slain One risen, is absolute disposer of the time and manner of our dying. It is not only that when our death comes we are to accept it as an opportunity for the "glorifying of God" in the sight and in the memory of those who know of it. It is that when we

have "passed through death," and come out upon the other side,—

> "When we enter yonder regions,
> When we touch the sacred shore,"—

Our relation to the Slain One risen, to Him who, as such, "hath the keys of Hades and of death," is perfectly continuous and the same. He is Master there, as well as here. And we, by consequence and correlation, are vassals, servants, slaves to Him, there as well as here.

We lay this message of the verse before our readers, not, of course, as if it were in the least degree new. But it is a truth which, we cannot but think, richly repays the Christian's repeated remembrance and reflection, and that not only in the way of asserting the eternal rights of our blessed Redeemer over us, but in the way of shedding light, and peace, and the sense of reality and expectation, on both the prospect of our own passage into eternity and the thoughts we entertain of the present life of our holy beloved ones who have entered into eternity before us.

Everything is precious which really assists

the soul in such thoughts, and at the same time keeps it fully and practically alive to the realities of faith, patience, and obedience here below, here in the present hour. While the indulgence of unauthorized imagination in that direction is almost always enervating and disturbing to the present action of Scriptural faith, the least help to a solid realization and anticipation, supplied by the word that cannot lie, is in its nature both hallowing and strengthening. And such a help we have assuredly here.

He who died and rose again, is at this hour, in holy might and right, the Lord of the blessed dead. Then the blessed dead are vassals and servants of Him who died and rose again. And all our thought of them, as they are now, at this hour, "in those holy and heavenly habitations where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity," gains in life, in reality, in strength and glory, as we see them, through this narrow but bright "door in heaven," not resting only, but serving also, before their Lord, who has bought them for His use, and who holds them in His use quite as truly now as when we had the joy of

their presence with us, and He was seen by us living and working in and through them here.

True it is that the leading and essential character of their present state is rest, as that of their resurrection state will be action. But the two states overflow into each other. In one glorious passage the Apostle describes the resurrection bliss as also "rest" (2 Thess. i. 7). And here we have it indicated that the heavenly intermediate rest is also service. What the precise nature of that service is we cannot tell. "Our knowledge of that life is small." Most certainly, "in vain our *fancy* strives to paint" its blessedness, both of repose and of occupation. This is part of our normal and God-chosen lot here, which is to "walk by faith, not by sight," οὐ διὰ εἴδους, not by Object seen, not by Objects seen. But blessed is the spiritual assistance in such a walk as we recollect, step by step, as we draw nearer that blessed assembly above, that, whatever be the manner and exercise of their holy life, it is life indeed; power, not weakness; service, not inaction. He who died, and revived, is LORD, not of us only, but of them.

CHRIST IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

By the Rev. James Wareing Bardsley, M.A.,
Vicar of Huddersfield, and Rural Dean.

CHRIST IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION.

"The power of His resurrection."—*Phil.* iii. 10.

IN the previous verses of this chapter St. Paul speaks of the religious privileges which he had inherited, and the life of formal perfection which he had lived. The Jew would consider such a heritage and such a life as a ladder by which the Apostle could safely climb from earth to heaven. With one blow he levels all these honours to the dust, and casting their worthless fragments before the foot of the cross, he exclaims, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own

righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And then he adds, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." The connection of thought is of the deepest importance. The Judaizer says, "Since you are justified by faith only, what inducement have you to perform good works?" "Ye adversaries," says the Apostle, "it is to perform good works that I am justified." Christ was raised from the dead for my justification, but He was also raised that by union with His risen life I might be conformed and changed into His image. The knowledge of which St. Paul speaks was not merely speculative, but practical and experimental, and it had two aspects—(1) "The power of His resurrection," of which we have to speak; (2) "The fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death." This latter aspect has a twofold reference—(1) to an inward conformity to the death of Christ, in the crucifixion of His old nature, "being made conformable to His death;" (2) to an outward conformity in bearing Christ's cross, and en-

during of persecution, and thus "having fellowship with His sufferings."

"The power of His resurrection."—The word "power," as it has been observed, occurs more than sixty times in St. Paul's writings. The word is characteristic. It seems to suit his strong and vigorous mind. He is speaking of a fact. "By 'the power of a fact,'" says Canon Liddon, "we mean the bearing, the consequences of it as distinct from its existence; we mean the inferences which may be drawn from it, or the influence it will naturally exert." Nay, more, we do not understand the power of that fact until we apply its conclusions and appropriate its benefits. All facts in God's universe have some kind of power; but the one central fact in the history of the world—the one fact which is the basis of Christianity and its cardinal doctrine—the one fact of which the disciples never had a doubt—the one fact which had the most stupendous influence upon their lives, and, through them, on the destinies of the human race, was the resurrection of Christ. Well might the Apostle speak of "the power of His resurrection." I

desire to speak of this "power" under four different aspects.

(1) The Evidential Power. The resurrection is the one fundamental fact which satisfies the Christian of the absolute truth of the religion of Christ. It was the experimental knowledge of this fact which caused a small band of teachers, for the most part unlettered peasants, "to be equal to nothing less than the moral and intellectual conquest of the world." The resurrection of Christ guarantees the absolute truth of Christ's teaching and mission. As in a chapter-house the entire roof is made to rest upon one central shaft, so all Christian truth rests upon this one pillar of our faith. See how the resurrection proved the power of Christ's person as well as the completeness of His work! Take the position of a school of thought to-day. The thoughtful Socinian cannot deny the fact of the resurrection. If there be one fact capable of proof, it is this; but he refuses to believe that Christ had any power to raise Himself, because that would directly prove that He was God. We say, if Christ were raised by the Father, that fact would be an absolute proof of

His Deity. Whilst living, Christ avowed Himself to be God. He declared Himself to be a sharer of the very nature and attributes of Deity. Whilst He was being condemned as a criminal, and saw the shameful death of the Cross before Him, He repeated to His judges the saying which He had already uttered to His disciples, that He should be raised to the right hand of the Divine Majesty, and would appear in Divine glory. That He did thus express Himself, is an historical fact; for it was made the ground of His condemnation, and afterwards formed the universal faith and the firmest hope of the Church of Christ. If Christ be not God, then you are tied down to the belief that God the Father exerted an infinite power to confirm a lie—that in the resurrection of Christ He showed His approval of blasphemy, and verified the words of an impostor. Well might St. Paul say that Christ "was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." This fact proved that the historic Christ was the eternal Logos. "The Word was God . . . the Word was made flesh." Never was there a time in the history

of the Church when it was of more importance to proclaim the Deity of Christ, the very heart of the Christian faith. Hold this one truth feebly, and we shall have but a feeble hold of the blessed hope of eternal life which is set before us in Jesus Christ our Lord; let it slip, and the whole fabric of Christianity will totter to its base, and our title to heaven will prove no better than a delusive dream. In an age of scepticism, we thank God for the evidential power of the resurrection of Christ! At the time of the French Revolution, in 1789, atheistic France sought to banish Christianity by the secular arm; but, as man must have a religion, a committee was formed to invent one. They found this most difficult. One of these so-called inventors of a new faith called upon Talleyrand and stated their position. Talleyrand smiled and said, sceptic as he was, "It is most easy to found a religion." The man said, "How?" "Get yourself crucified, and only rise again the third day from the dead, and you will without doubt found a religion," was the reply. Yes, my brethren, and a religion that can never die. "The existence of the Church of Christ

after a period of eighteen centuries is the first and (if rightly viewed)," as Professor Westcott observes, "the final proof of the historic truth of the miracle on which it was founded."

(2) I must at once consider the second aspect of "The power of His resurrection"—the Moral and Spiritual power, to which St. Paul more directly refers in the text. The resurrection is the proof by fact, on the part of God, that sin is forgiven. It is the eternally precious doctrine of the Gospel, that Christ by His death has made atonement for sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and satisfied every requirement of the Divine law for us and in our place. It is not enough to calm the anxious soul, that on so vital a point we receive the testimony of an Apostle or even of an angel. God the Lawgiver Himself must speak from heaven, if the possibility of even the last doubt is to disappear. Immediately after St. Paul had stated that "He," Christ, "was delivered for our offences," he adds those all-important words, "and was raised for our justification." The resurrection of Christ was the receipt whereby God showed that He had cancelled the debt of

the human race. But the words, "the power of His resurrection" mean more than this. The salvation which is by Christ Jesus offers to man not only pardon, but renewal and restoration; a new heart, a new life, a new supreme attraction, drawing men ever by its sweet but resistless constraints into close and holy fellowship with the life of God. "I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." The same power that raised Christ from the dead quickens and sanctifies the people of God. The Spirit is the author of the one life which unites all living members of the mystical body with Christ the living head. We find no warrant in Scripture for the assertion that the Christian life is merely the natural development of the religious germ which is found in every man. The teaching of the New Testament is distinct and clear. When Christ was raised physically, all His people were ideally raised in Him; and in consequence of union with Him, they are through faith actually quickened and raised. When St. Paul had spoken to the Ephesians of the mighty power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set

Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places—realizing the federal headship of Christ—that He rose not as an isolated individual, but as the representative of redeemed humanity, as the head of His body the Church—he says, "Even when we were dead in sins [God] hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Precious as are my moments, I must guard against one mistake. "The life which Christ lived upon the earth before His cross was not the life which He came to communicate to His people. All that life He lived chiefly that He might purchase the life which He was about to bestow. He must go through death that He may procure life for the Church." Christ's first birth was the birth of our pattern; His second birth, His resurrection, was the birth of our power. With the resurrection came the power to conform us to the pattern. Our death is gone. It is behind us. Our life is imperishably hid with Christ in God. "I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." In the words of Mr. Vaughan, whom I have just quoted, the life of

the believer flows on in the life of Christ—flows and shall flow for ever and ever in His and by His and with His. He "that hath the Son hath life." He "that believeth on Me shall never die." By the incarnation the Divine was born into the sphere of the human, that by the resurrection the human might be born into the sphere of the Divine for ever.

(3) Let us in the third place consider the power to which the resurrection led. The incarnation of Christ was the birth of a priest after the order of Aaron—a priest who was to bleed and die. His resurrection was the birth of a priest after the order of Melchisedec, who was for ever to live and reign. The resurrection of Christ was the visible enthronement of the righteous and eternal King. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." The music of His coronation anthem seemed to stream down along the path by which He passed up to the throne. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." No sooner was Christ seated at the right hand of God than He at once assumed kingly power. The descent of

the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was a distinct manifestation of His Divine sovereignty. I dare not speak of the extent and the government of the kingdom of Christ to-day. The Apocalypse is the revelation of the sway of Jesus in every age of the Church and in every epoch of the world. I can only refer to one point connected with the administration of His Church. The Apostolic commission was really given from heaven, and not from earth. When the risen Christ breathed on His Apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," Thomas was absent, and others, ordinary disciples, were present. This prefiguration of Pentecost was the commission of a society and not of an order —the charter of each individual member of the Church of Christ—the great symbol of "the power of His resurrection." God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life—he sinned, he fell, he died. Christ by an act of creative energy breathes into His body, the Church, the breath of His risen life. "The first Adam was made a living soul, the second Adam was made a quickening spirit." Our natural life, our generation, is from the first Adam by transmission, by

succession ; our spiritual life, our regeneration, is by direct communication. "To whom, coming as a living stone, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." Every conversion is a direct act of Christ's kingly power. From heaven came the gift of the ministry on the day of Pentecost. When "He ascended up on high He . . . gave gifts unto men." Christ still lives, Christ still reigns. Christ is not merely a past greatness, but a present living power. "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is a defect of current theology which regards Christ as having founded the Church, and then as having retired to let it work its way. Christ did not merely infuse a fresh and living stream into the channels of human history eighteen hundred years ago. He is to-day, by the power of the Spirit, in the heart of the believer, in the Church, and in the world a fountain of living water. We are as near to the spring of life as the Apostles themselves. Christ is a vital presence, and not a bygone story ; a present force, and not a past tradition. The Church has an eternally reproductive energy in Christ. The spiritual power

of the Church of England does not depend upon the century or epoch in which it exists. It does not depend upon its Apostolic origin or its Apostolic discipline and mode of government, but it absolutely depends upon the presence of the Spirit, upon the faith of its members, and the closeness of their communion with their living Lord. The administration of grace is still in the hands of Christ. He never has and He never will abrogate His dominion. He is a King, a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Van Oosterzee finely says: "Christ, after His departure from earth, was not like the sun which has gone down, and now only by a bright sunset gives testimony of its former glory; it is the sun risen to noontide height; and as, notwithstanding all conductors of heat, it is the sun itself whose force unceasingly flows to us through these channels, so is it the living Christ Himself who rules notwithstanding, nay, by the means through which He continues to operate in His ransomed Church." When we see men offering themselves for the ministry of the Gospel at home or abroad, when we behold the wondrous revival of spiritual life

in the Church of England to-day, when we see the marvellous progress of the kingdom of Christ in heathen lands, we look up and say, "These things are because of 'the power of His resurrection.'"

(4) "The power of His resurrection" as asserting the dignity and enforcing the claims of the human body. Professor Godet, when comparing the Christian life to a journey, writes: "In every journey there is a goal, a course, and a starting-point. St. Peter dwells mainly on the goal, the glory to be revealed; St. James, on the course, good works, 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' St. Paul, on the starting-point, 'Justification by faith.'"

In the chapter from which we have taken our text, St. Paul comprehends all. He enters upon the course, "being found in Him." In our text and in the words, "I press toward the mark," he describes the route; and then, in the twenty-first verse, he speaks of the goal: "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working

whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (R.V.). "Thy son is dead," said one to a heathen philosopher. "I did not think that I had begotten a God," was the sad and patient answer. "Thy father is dead," said one to a Christian monk. "Thou liest; my father is immortal," was the reply. But something higher than the mere immortality of the soul is here in question, something nobler is proclaimed to us in the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The relationship of Christ as Head to His people, the body, demands that when He already lives, His members should not continue in death. Yea, His Spirit is already in the believing heart, the pledge that He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken their mortal bodies. Christ's incarnation, in the nature of the first Adam, was the budding of a branch in the tree of humanity; His resurrection, as the second Adam, was the quickening of the root. Admit the Deity of Christ, and His death and resurrection are no longer of the individual, but of the race. As we enter with Peter into the open sepulchre, we see not only the napkin that

was about the head, but also the linen clothes that swathed the body. When Christ rose from the dead, He left behind Him for ever, not only for Himself the Head, but for His body the Church, the symbols and trappings of death. This is "the power of His resurrection." Forgive me if for a moment longer I dwell upon so exalted and comforting a theme. We are assured that our sainted dead are laid to sleep by Jesus. Death is but a sleep, and why? We are never told that Christ "fell asleep." Christ died as no other child of humanity died. "He tasted death." He drank up all that was penal in death, that His people might sleep. Christ entered the tomb. It was a prison to Him. He rose, and in His triumphant power razed the stronghold of sin, burst asunder the fetters of death, carried away the gates of the grave, and "led captivity captive." Now the sepulchre of the saint is a chamber where his body peacefully sleeps until the voice of the great Awakener—a voice sweeter far than angel's music—shall be heard in the resurrection morn, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." Then shall the risen saints, see-

ing their Master's image in themselves, be satisfied. "Then shall the body, itself spiritual, turn to be the wings by which the spirit soars. Then shall eyes open on forms they love, lovelier in Jesus. Then shall heart cleave to heart in fellowships of which the fondest affections of earth are but the dark, dim shadows." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." We are but sentinels watching for the break of day,

> "Till with the morn those angel faces smile,
> Which we have loved long since and lost awhile."

We stand upon the shore of death; it is bare and bleak, but the ear of faith listens to the murmur and the swell which tells us that the tide of eternal life is setting in toward the world of graves. May the thought of the resurrection ever shine before us: it may be still in the long distance, yet none the less a living reality, a hope and an inspiration lifting us beyond all the strife, the struggles, the temptations, and the agonies of the world.

As we think of the influences which centre round the open sepulchre of Christ—the evi-

dential power which seals our faith, the moral and spiritual power manifested in the regeneration of souls and their growth in grace, the kingly power of our reigning Lord, the Apocalypse of believing and trusting hearts, evidenced in the continuity of a living ministry, or as the sweet comfort of a final meeting in the kingdom of the redeemed distils into our inmost heart—we see that these lines radiate to one common centre. We trace up these streams to one common source. We remember that each throb of quickening life and blessed hope is drawn out of the unfathomable fountain of "the power of His resurrection."

CHRIST THE ASCENDED LORD.

By the VENERABLE JOHN RICHARDSON, D.D.,
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CHRIST THE ASCENDED LORD.

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."—*Eph.* iv. 10.

IN these few words we have the whole history of the Lord Jesus Christ. They carry us back into eternity past, and help us to think of "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was." They carry us forward into the eternity to come; and we learn how the Father has "set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, . . . and hath put all things under His feet." These short sentences, with their long meanings, were not given without a purpose. They abound in the Word of God; as if the servants of God were expected to meditate and think them out; then to gather them and store them up. The Jewish people, because they were a persecuted race, laid up

their wealth in jewels and gems, precious things easily carried and fondly cherished, for the times of trial told how soon they might be driven from the common possessions of life. And Christ's people, who know not what a day may bring forth, are glad to have Divine wisdom in narrow compass, such as memory can carry, and yet thought can delight to examine and find how beautiful and how valuable the truth, as it is in Jesus, proves. We cannot think too often, or know too much of our blessed Lord and Master; and a man who is ignorant about these greatest matters, because he has given attention only to lower and meaner things, condemns himself of a folly which he will be sorry for, when he finds how much he has lost that he might have won. I ask for very close attention, therefore, to this short text; not only for attention now, but investigation afterwards; because it has so much to tell which we ought all to know.

(1) *Christ descended; what may we learn from that?* It tells of the high place from which He has come down. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "Who is the image of the invisible

God, the firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by Him and for Him ; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Have you or I mastered that great fact about the Redeemer? Have we considered how great a thing salvation must be, when only He could finish it? Have we thought what the honour should be, which the Lord Jesus ought to have, from those whom He came down to rescue and to raise into His kingdom and glory? The world has not yet done justice to Christianity or to Christ. The Church has never fully represented the honour which God conferred upon the fallen family of man, when " He gave His only-begotten Son."

The pre-existence of Christ has been explained by St. John in the first chapter of his Gospel ; but human thought has yet much to extract from his deep words, " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God." May the Holy Ghost open our understanding, that we may know whence

Christ came, and what He was and is, in the wonders of the life and the position which He had before He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." But the Saviour's descent has much to say about the condition into which He came. "He took upon Him the form of a servant;" but angels serve, and they take it to be an honour. He "was made in the likeness of men;" but there are high and holy men, on whom God is looking with approval, as they do their great work, in His wide world, for the glory of their Maker, and for the good of men. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death;" but that is the common lot of all men, and thousands every day face that mysterious fact as they pass from the seen into the unseen; and yet they die, without a shudder or a murmur, by reason of their faith and hope and love. It was "even the death of the Cross:" and though two malefactors were crucified with Him, yet, take "agony of soul" and anguish of body together, and nothing that earth has ever seen has equalled the sufferings of Him who died for you and me. I ask you to study the story of the Cross: what

it meant to the Saviour, what it has brought to the saved, and what it will have to tell about the unsaved, when they "neglect so great salvation." The Holy Jesus came into the midst of sins and sorrows, and "He was despised and rejected of men." He "went about doing good," and they turned their scorn, their hate, their cruelty upon Him. He "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" and they said He was a malefactor, for whom there was to be no pity, no judgment, no salvation. The shame upon humanity, the stain of this fallen world of ours, is this, that "the Son of Man had not where to lay His head." And in every age, in every place, in the history of us all, this sad reflection should sink into our hearts, that man's treatment of the Lord's mercy, the sinner's rejection of the Redeemer's love, the believer's indifference to much that the Saviour has taught, has become a disgrace upon many, who know so little what the life and death and revelation of Christ have taught. But my text takes us into another field of thought.

(2) "*The same also ascended, far above all heavens.*" *What may we learn from that?* We

are reminded first of the vastness of the creation which the Lord God has made. We are not to limit our ideas by what is visible to mortal eyes. The far-off stars are centres, large and many, to show how wide the rule of God must be. But we read of the heaven of heavens—the third heavens, up to which the spirit of St. Paul was caught—and this seems to say that there are still higher and larger domains, which the eye of man cannot reach, and yet the hand of God sustains and governs. So, again, Holy Scripture tells of principalities and powers, as if to remind us that space may be peopled by other orders of intelligent beings than we have ever even thought about aright. But one thing comes out: that the Lord Jesus is higher than all high things which God has made. He has ascended to the throne of God above all that the universal ruler governs. So, when imagination fails to take in many grand realities, faith can go further still, and say that the Saviour is "head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Out of these great truths the believer's reverence comes; and Christians take the gift of the great salvation

at the hand of Him whose high estate adds pleasure to the privileges which the Redeemer bestows upon the redeemed. And to these great facts may be traced the security of a Christian's hope. Who need doubt the word or the power of this glorious Saviour, who can look down upon all portions of His dominions, and cause all things to work together for good to them that love God? But what does the ascension further teach? It shows that the Son of God has gone up to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and the Son of Man has taken our human nature into the glory upon the universal throne. The ascension elevated humanity; and in the glorified Christ we have the joyful expectation of an incorruptible human body and a glorified human soul. Many are the benefits of faith even here and now. Our holy religion has expanded our human knowledge; for Christ has "thrown light upon life and immortality, through the Gospel." It has also elevated our human pleasures; for it has lifted human desires above the changeful things of earth, and beyond the duller pleasures of sense, and further than the passing enjoyments of time. So Christians

ascend in heart and thought whither our Saviour Christ has gone before; and hope is higher, and desire is purer, and ambition is holier, when the soul, under grace, is waiting for the glory which shall be revealed in us. But, think of all that the believer is to be, and you will be helped by the information, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be."

The real Christian may well be a man of large expectations. He has no boastful spirit, because he is a debtor to grace for all that he has or hopes for. But he has no cowardly spirit; for whatever may be the difficulties of the way, or the weakness of the flesh, or the violence of the enemy, the end will come with its victories and its inheritance, its honours and its joys, the happy home, the holy family, the heavenly worship; and man restored will hear again the blessed announcement when God shall look upon the things that His grace has made, and declare all to be very good.

We hear much, in this day, about the honour of our humanity; and something within us may tell that it is a natural craving, when men in low estate long for restoration. But the history of

man's exaltation is not to be found in the scheming of men, but in the provision made by God Himself. We Christians believe in a Paradise regained ; but we expect it according to the plan which the wisdom and love of our Heavenly Father has laid down. And when we stand gazing up into heaven, as the first disciples did when the Lord Jesus went up from their midst, or while we read and think what the Psalmist meant by the strange words, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in," we are filled with a grand idea of a coming existence in a grander world, where we shall personally enjoy all that our Lord Himself provided and promised to them that look for and love His appearing. Oh for that higher life, the holy life of the regenerate soul, in which you and I may better understand what Christ is, and what Christians are to be! And further still—

(3) "*That He might fill all things.*" *What does that imply?* The idea seems to be, that nothing can be incomplete which the Lord Jesus has undertaken to supply. We think of

the places which the Lord has gone to prepare for His people in heaven; and we understand that till the whole family shall be gathered, some of the abiding-places will not be filled. Many are now with the Lord, and our hearts are glad that the family in heaven has grown so large; and we are longing to find our places above; and the multitude that no man can number will one day become a glorious whole. Well, our consolation is, that the Lord will fill all things, so that no vacant places will be in the home above. "The whole family in heaven and earth is named" of Him, and must be collected round Him, to be "ever with the Lord." Then our thought turns to the wondrous plan and purposes which have been in the mind and under the Providence of God from the beginning of the world. We see not yet its full accomplishment; and we are told that many great hindrances have appeared, and are at work, to make the counsel of God of none effect. The history of the Church has many blots and blemishes on it; and "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse." There is very much land yet to be occupied in the Master's

name ; and the great enemy holds a position in the world from which it seems impossible that He should be dislodged. The Lord's servants have been falling out by the way. There are always some false ones found to have betrayed their Lord ; and we are all conscious of inconsistency in our own character and life and work. Still, one great truth dominates all the difficulties ; "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," and Jesus will shortly accomplish the number of His elect, and finish the work which was given Him to do. Then, as we shall look back upon the whole, the Divine providence and procedure, the conviction will rise to us as to the chosen people of God—"Not one thing hath failed of all the things that God has promised." "Hath He said it, and shall He not make it good?"

So we consider another state of things. In our own souls, with the very holiest people, in their very best moments, a sense of incompleteness will come in. There are great failings in our experiences, great gaps in our expectations of delight, great regrets, great humiliations, great wants, great shortcomings, great yearn-

ings after something more. Still, the supply has never quite failed, the light has not quite gone out, the water and the bread have not been clean cut off. Even while we are faint, we are still pursuing; and though we are weak, yet in the Lord we remain strong. The explanation is, that Christ can fill all things. He is "all," in "all His people." "The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing." So we look for the coming performance of every exceeding great and precious promise; and we take it to be true, because God has said it, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." We "trust in the Lord for ever, for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

What, then, are the great lessons that these facts were meant to teach? "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." One thing, surely, must be this. Let no man be afraid or ashamed when he is brought low. High places are often dangerous; and too much success has made many a man proud, who was happier and safer when he was a humbler man. The Saviour's mind should be in us; and He

humbled Himself upon earth. Cultivate a real spirit of submission before your God. Be careful about your soul's health, specially when the pleasures and prosperities of life tempt you to think and feel as if you were a person to be envied, a man to be flattered and pleased, a servant who may now sit down in a high place among the Redeemer's guests. The heart can easily be snared by the vanities of earth; and under the sunshine of worldly success, a Christian may be sometimes ready to forget that there is yet a better part to be expected in heaven. Another lesson may be this—that as He who descended is the same also that ascended, so we from our lowest situation may look up for something higher. The Saviour's ascension has left a streak of holy hope that can be traced through the darkest cloud. His holy footprints can be seen in front to encourage us to climb over the roughest rocks and snow. However high our thought may rise on the wings of faith and love, something in the Saviour's invitation, or instruction, or example, will say that we may still mount higher. So let us all be hopeful, all aspiring, all remembering that "the path of the

just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Lastly, may we not all remember that perfection only is to be found in Christ Jesus our Lord; and the fulness of joy is only to be had in His presence, and only at His right hand can there be pleasure for evermore? It is of God's own arrangement that man shall never be satisfied with anything less or lower than God Himself. The poor sinner, as he finds time passing so hurriedly, and earthly holds becoming so uncertain and so few, and worldly pleasures failing to please when the shadow of death closes round as a cloud, through which no hope can pass, is as a traveller trembling at every step, unwilling to go further and unable to go back. He must have sad misgivings whenever he dares to reflect that he has gone astray so long that his iniquity will be his ruin. Oh! who would like thus to end a life, and thus to be alarmed about the future? It should not be so, and it need not be so, with you or me, my friends. For think what the humblest follower of the Lord Jesus Christ can say. "Complete in Him," "accepted in the Beloved," "presented in Christ

Jesus without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," the Redeemed of the Lord have "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," "reserved in heaven for" us "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last day."

Brethren, let us "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This, if we do, we shall "rise on wings as eagles"; "we shall go from strength to strength," "from grace to grace," from faith to sight, from hoping to having, from time into eternity, and after earth through death into immortality and heaven. What glorious glimpses, what a ladder of delight, what beckonings of goodness, what vistas of everlasting brightness, what picturings of holy hope, can all come out of sober reflections even upon one short text! Well may we treasure it, and take it home, test it, and believe it real, lean upon it, and make it the very stay and comfort of our soul; for it is delightfully true, ever and to all who belong to the Lord Jesus, "He that descended is the same also that ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—I.

By the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, M.A.,
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CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—I.

IT is a happy feature of to-day that, go where we will, we find among Christian men and women a marked and manifest desire for "something more." The desire takes very different shapes and expressions, and some of them sadden rather than gladden the observer who knows the depth and strength of the old "faith once delivered." But even these phenomena have a connection with the happy fact that far and wide there is a longing for "a closer walk with God," "a yearning for a deeper peace not felt before," a search after more power and serviceableness in the work of the Lord. Is not this an altogether happy thing in itself?

The desire is no new thing. It is old as the Gospel, and continuous as the Gospel. Young Christians who think it was born with their

generation know little of the past, and will gain much by "preparing themselves to the search of their fathers;" such fathers, for example, as Baxter, and Brainerd, and Romaine, and Hervey, and Martyn, and M'Cheyne. But the extent over which the desire is felt in depth and force is a new and manifestly growing thing. So viewed, the phenomenon calls for glad and thankful welcome, and not least from the students and lovers of the Christian past. For in its essence, in its nature, it is just a proof of the immortal vigour of the old Gospel. It forbodes no change in one iota of that Gospel. It is a cry for new realization of old truth. It has no necessary tendency towards novel theories of acceptance, or of life, or of power. No, but towards a firmer grasp, a deeper-sighted and more restful appropriation, a more buoyant and expectant use, of what in itself, and in "the faith of God's elect," is the same yesterday and for ever. Thanks be to God for this stronger and fuller pulse of life in an immortal frame. Happy the Christian man who feels it in his own individuality, with its holy warmth and health. Happy the Christian

teacher who, in face of it, knows how to guide without discouraging, to warn without repelling, to welcome the heavenly upspringing gale, and give thanks for it, without forgetting chart, compass, helm, and anchor.

The double heading of these papers is suggested by two directions of this blessed spread of the "desire for more." On the one hand there is a large and growing sense that the New Testament doctrine of Union with the Son of God as our life spiritual and eternal is a truth pregnant of "boundless stores of grace." *Life in Christ* may be a phrase sometimes appropriated by error, but it is felt by more believing souls, and yet more to be a primary treasure of the truth itself. And on the other side, as to exercise and outcome, there is a growing sense all over our living Christendom that the holy life-power is meant for a holy life-practice and life-service. *Christ in Life* is for many among us a motto charged with the force of a new realization. In the rising warmth and light of the holy life, certain imaginary partitions between supposed secular and consecrated parts of a Christian's walk and work melt away into

air. He discovers himself, in many a case where once it was quite undiscovered, to be always and everywhere the bondservant of Jesus Christ, and the living limb of the blessed Head, and the vital branch of the blessed Root. He not only accepts as theory, but assimilates as living truth, the certainty that He is everywhere and always not his own ; that he exists morning, noon, and night, and then to-morrow again, as one who has nothing and is nothing irrespective of Him in whom and by whom he lives.

Is it not so? And is it not a developing aspect in Christian life, service, and witness? Nothing can be older-fashioned in principle and in individual instances. It is as old as Ken's "Direct, control, suggest," and as Charles Wesley's "Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go," and vastly older. But in the sense of an ever-widening consciousness in the community, and, in countless cases, a new and often sudden depth of personal recognition, and embrace, and expectation, and restful strength, there is newness, there is growth.

In some following papers, if it please God, I

may take up the motto *Christ in Life*, and follow it into some details. To-day let us think a little of the antecedent and underlying truth *Life in Christ.*

"God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life;" "Christ, who is our life;" "Because I live, ye shall live also;" "He that eateth Me, even he shall live because of Me;" "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Such are a few links of this bright chain of truth. I have nothing at all new to say about them. But let us recollect a little of what we know.

(1) We know that the Scripture means all that it says about Life in Christ. Its infallible language—in other words, its Divinely accurate language—certainly does not call for explaining away when it speaks of the believer's life in the Son of God. True, it does not, therefore, demand any theory of local and quasi-material connection and infusion. But what it does demand is, that by our life in Him is meant more, far more, than emotions towards Him on our part, or even than His own most sacred and

infinitely needed action of love and mercy towards us, in substitution, rescue, protection, and our covenant acceptance under His mediation. Not one of those truths can we really dispense with, if we would at once be awake and at peace. Let no fashions of opinion discredit for us the mighty legality (in the noblest sense) of the Gospel-presentation of salvation; nor let the inestimable preciousness of redeeming mercy, the Divine warmth and depth of saving and pleading love, be thrown into the shadow for us by—anything. Nevertheless, Life in Christ is a truth not identical with these holy things, though eternally connected with them. It means, it implies, such a *nexus* of the regenerate man with the blessed Lord—incarnate, sacrificed, glorified—such a *nexus* with Him by the power of the Holy Comforter, τὸ ζωοποιόν, as that a new and quite supernatural continuity and solidarity is set up between the man and the Lord. In that *nexus* the "fulness of God" has flow and passage into the will, understanding, and affections of the regenerate in a sense indefinitely deeper than that of moral suasion, or great example, or emotional attraction. The

man and the Lord are "one Spirit." The Head has indeed a new limb; the limb a living and empowering Head. There is not only new action (as in one degree or another there will certainly be), but new basis for action; a new fulcrum for the lever of love. The bond is spiritual, wholly. It is the Holy Comforter. But it is therefore infinitely more than a vivid figure. It is life, it is power, in their inmost and ultimate essence. Such is the vital union of every regenerate man with Christ.

(2) We know, again, that this union is revealed to be used, and is revealed as a thing to be developed, as to result and fruition, in the using. And one all-momentous method of at once inwardly using it and going forth with it to use it in outward service, is the active exercise of meditation upon it, or rather upon HIM who is our Life. For the life is life not in an abstraction, not in τὸ ὄν, but in Christ. And what a difference is made in the experience and employment of it, therefore, by the deepening acquaintance of its happy possessor with Him! Do you indeed, by the Holy Spirit, possess Him? Then set yourself anew, as if for the

first time, to acquaint yourself with Him. "Consider Him." More difference than many a Christian man thinks is made by neglect of that "consideration." And there is only one certain path and school for it; the search and study, before the Lord, and in faith and prayer, of the Holy Scriptures.

It was but just now that I read words, written by a young Christian man not long ago awakened to Jesus Christ, which I hope to remember for myself: "We may know Him, and yet know very little about Him." It is so. Our very assurance of life in the Lord may be misused to slacken our study of the Lord; and then, soon or late, our use and growth of life in Him will suffer. The Christ of Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles must be our study; not "the Christ that is to be," but the Christ Jesus who is the same for ever. His Person, His Work, His Glory, we must bend over the revelation, the one revelation, of this, and—with reverence be it said—assimilate it into thought, and tone, and spirit, into the cast and character of our love, and joy, and peace, and adoration.

And all this, meanwhile, as "having life;" as being united, in a depth we believe but can never fully know, with Him we look upon and worship. So be it.

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—II

By the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, M.A.,
Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—II.

WE briefly reviewed last week something of the spiritual mystery and fact of Life in Christ, taking the phrase as expressive of our Vital Union with the Lord, which is its special and leading, though not exclusive, reference. Enough, I trust, was said in that paper to guard our meditation from the risks inseparable from a *real* oblivion of other sides of truth while we are treating of one, even of a pre-eminent one. Union in covenant-interest, union in the merits and righteousness of our Head, must never be really forgotten, never dropped out of thankful approbation, while we dwell upon this other side, the true vital solidarity between the member and the Head. The Lord grant us so to hold fast both aspects of revealed truth as that each shall not only safeguard for us, but vivify and glorify the other.

But we are confessedly here dwelling for the time emphatically upon this one aspect.

And now for a few short studies on the application of this Divine mystery and fact. *Christ in Life* is the sequel in thought and concomitant in experience to *Life in Christ.*

A beautiful suggestion of the deep connection of these two holy things is conveyed by what is, in fact, a mistranslation in Luther's Bible. Luther renders Philippians i. 21, *Christus ist mein Leben, und Sterben ist mein Gewinn;* "Christ is my Life, and death is my gain." The words are familiar in German religious poetry; and they may have been seen by some of my readers as a pious motto on ancient *châlets* in German Switzerland; one such I remember, with the date 1624, not far from Thun. Now this rendering of the first clause of the verse cannot be sustained, it is true, from the scholar's point of view; we must translate, "To me to live is Christ." But when we weigh that wonderful little sentence, and read it over in the light of Scripture, seeking to enter somewhat into its depth and length, does not *Christus ist mein Leben* shine through it from beneath?

A life, a life-course and life-work, which may be summed up and described as "Christ," can it be anything else and less than the stream of a Spring which is the living Lord Himself?

"To me to live is Christ." The words elude alike a superficial explanation and an elaborate analysis. Their best exegesis lies in the study, and in the practice, of what it is to go out into the realities of day by day as one who lives, in the secret of the soul, in and by the Son of God.

"To go out," I have just said, "into the realities of day by day." But the words "go out" must not be taken as relating only to the activities of human intercourse. "Christ in Life" is a principle whose first *outcome* is in secret, in the chamber where the doors are shut. And it is of this outgoing and exercise of life in Christ that I write a little this week, reserving for after treatment some points of our walk and intercourse with men. Such is the true spiritual order. What the Christian man really is in the home circle, in the street and market, in society, in public, depends, in the order of grace, with an intense sequence

and connection, upon what he is, upon what the Lord is to him, when he is quite alone.

This most certain fact has a special light cast upon it by the truth of Life in Christ. That truth, as we ponder it and embrace it with growing realization, sheds a joyful, while solemn, vividness upon all thoughts of the Lord's presence, and of our intercourse with Him. It throws its cords of life and love around all other truths of that presence and intercourse, and draws them home. All that we know of the Lord's friendship, companionship, masterhood, and all we know, again, of His mediation, intercession, and high-priesthood, comes home with ever renewed preciousness and power when we see it in the light of His life-union with us, with me. Seen in that light, how instantaneous is the touch upon Him of the prayer of the regenerate believer! how tender and powerful the touch upon the believer of His messages by the Spirit through the Word! how deep the repose, how intense, meanwhile, the interest, of the facts of His work for us, for me, in the Holy Place, when I recollect, when I clasp and realize the truth, that while He is

indeed there *for* me, a Person not myself, pleading the causes of my soul, and dealing most objectively with both its guilt and its weakness, still, He is all the time in me, and I in Him—my Prince, my Priest, but also and inseparably my Head, my Life!

Let me lay it down, then, in humble earnestness, that the stream of *Christ in Life* must flow out from the well of *Life in Christ*, first, in every sense first, in secret. Let no inference from the blessed truth of Jesus Christ's "ability to keep" beguile us into slackness in watching, praying, adoring, reading, thinking, believing, in secret. Rather, let us all the more practise diligence over the secret means of grace, because of a joyful recognition of the mighty present reality of grace, that is to say, of "God working in us." Are we indeed united to Jesus Christ who is our life? Then we are united to Him who, possessing the immeasurable Spirit, yet "continued in prayer," yes, continued sometimes all night in it, and who so read the Scriptures that He knew how to draw from their very nooks and corners the sword with which to lay low the

Tempter. Are we united to Him? Then we are united to One who loved not only to request, but to adore; whose blessed prayer (John xvii.) uttered indeed in His disciples' hearing, but yet in the Secret of the Presence, is steeped throughout in an indescribable reverence; "Holy Father," "Righteous Father."

Here then is a manifestation of Life in Christ, underlying every other, antecedent in a sense to every other—Christ in the life of the secret place and hour. Christ in that life—what will it mean? It will mean for one thing a patient and exploring study of the Scripture, even as He studied it. It will mean prayer and adoration instinct with His presence and life. The believer will take his Lord, as the Gospels present Him, for his pattern in this secret walk with the Father; while he will add always to the thought of the pattern the truth of the Mystical Union. He approaches Him that is invisible as one who indeed has access, introduction (Eph. ii. 18), "*in* the beloved" (Eph. i. 6). To speak in terms of the simplest practicality, the living Christian will do anything rather than make his "life" an excuse for indolence, and a

want of method and self-discipline, in secret devotion; or for a want of adoring reverence in the manner of it; or for neglect of the Written word as a vital element in it, and as the one sure guide and guard of it all along. He will most specially take care that "Christ" is thus "in his life" in respect of morning intercourse with Him. His "morning watch" will be a time of sacred necessity and blessed benefit. He will not merely confess the duty of "meeting God before he meets man." He will understand that he cannot do without it, if indeed he would deal with the unfolding day as it should be dealt with by one whose life is hid with Christ in God; one who possesses the priceless treasure of the blessed Union, "joined to the Lord, one Spirit," and who has his treasure at hand, in hand, for use. And he will be not less watchful over his evening interview with Him who is at once his Master and his Life; coming with punctual reverence *to* Him who meanwhile "liveth *in* him," to report the day's bond-service, to confess the day's sins in contrite simplicity, to look again deliberately upon the Master's face mirrored in His Word, to feel

again the bond of the Union, tested and handled through the promises; and then to lie down in the peace of God. And will he not see whether some mid-day interval, if but for a few brief minutes, cannot be found and kept sacred, for a special prayer and watch halfway? Such stated times are no substitutes for the spiritual attitude in which the "eyes are *ever* towards the Lord;" but they are, I believe, quite necessary in order to the proper preparedness of the soul for that attitude, and for the right use, too, of all social and public ordinances. Nothing can annul the vital deed of secret and deliberate communion with Him in whom we live, by whom we move.

As I close, let me remember that "Christ in secret life" does not mean only Christ in secret devotion. Most men have some work to do, some leisure to dispose of, in secret; some men have much. Let the man who indeed has life in Christ remember that in secret work and secret leisure Christ must be in life. Toiling in his study, resting at his fireside, walking in the quiet field, threading the solitude of the crowded street, he is still "joined unto the

Lord, one Spirit." In that fact lie secrets of the noblest freedom. It is a fact able to fit into the widest range of interests, and into greatly varying moods of natural emotion. It has nothing to do with a Stoic "apathy." Rather, it is able to quicken and refine every pure sympathy as nothing else can do. But meanwhile it has its restraint as well as its animation; it has its *noblesse oblige*, for the Christian who recollects, alone as well as in company, that the Spirit is in him, and Christ by the Spirit.

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—III.

By the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, M.A.,
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CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—III.

OUR last week's thoughts took the line of the secret and solitary parts of life. We go out from this privacy to-day into the broad open field, into the days and hours which we spend in active intercourse. The vastness of the subject would be not only discouraging but prohibitive if I had the dream of treating it, or even a part of it, in detail. What thoughtful man is not growingly aware of the infinity of duty, of the variety of circumstances in their incidence on character, of the impossibility of constructing *à priori* solutions in detail for all possible cases of conscience? Who does not feel, as life goes on, and wears into our beings the "line on line" of its lessons, or rather of the Lord's lessons through it, that it is the most impossible of things to be the conscience of another man; that, for example, the experiences

of different lines of life and work vary so much and in such subtle ways that the traveller in one line only cannot possibly divine by instinct many of the special temptations of another? Nay, in the subdivision of labour, different tracts worn on the same high-road have characteristics all their own. A clergyman whose life-work is academic teaching cannot enter *à priori* into many special problems constantly presented to his pastor-brother; nor can the pastor in the town tell by "inner consciousness" what are the tests and burdens of his brother in the country.

A sense of the importance and reality of such details of life is just what warns me not to try to meddle with them directly. On the two occasions now before me I would rather seek, by the heavenly Master's grace, to get, in some sense, behind or within the vast world of details to an interior so central that its power may radiate into them all, and that the Christian of whatever character or calling may recognise a something which comes home to his need.

In this view I will say a little here of *Life in Christ*, and *Christ in Life* in the direction

of the *detaching and separating* power of those truths Later on, if it please God, we will consider their power to give us true *contact and sympathy*, so to speak, with circumstances.

"Their detaching and separating power." It is one of the paradoxes of the Gospel that it separates in order to unite. It demands of its disciples, who are to be "the salt of the earth," that in order to this they shall not "set their affection on things on the earth." In order to the blessing of the world, in order that the world through them may be led to believe that the Father sent the Son, they are to be "not of the world;" "delivered from this present evil world;" "loving not the world, nor the things that are in the world." The Lord Jesus Christ endorses the spirit of the Mosaic precept, "He that curseth father or mother, let Him die the death;" and the Gospel may be said to be the almost creator of home, the true secret and life of the sanctities and charities of the family. Yet the same lips have said, "If any man hate not his father and his mother, he cannot be my disciple." Is there a contradiction in these sayings? Indeed there is upon the surface

but in the depth they strike a holy and mighty harmony. In order to the true work and true joy of all human relationships, and intercourse, and help, and influence, there must be an internal separation in the regenerate man; a separation from the creature as rival to the Creator and Redeemer, a separation from self to Jesus Christ. That separation is the truest pathway to the deepest and most fruitful experiences of sympathy and contact.

The whole Gospel is full of the truth of this internal separation. It has much to say, indeed, about external separations, for which need may often arise. But it has vastly more to say about this detachment inwardly. Every precept bears upon it which speaks of supreme love to God; of "forsaking all that we have" for Christ; of being the Lord's property whether we live or die; of being His purchased possession, His servants in a literal bondage, brought about by redemption, and reverently owned, and in some measure realized, in self-surrendering faith. The great range of truth connected with Atonement and satisfaction bears upon this, because it bears with such intense directness on

the transference of us from the usurping master to the true Master, who died for us that we might go free and yet never go free; "redeemed from the curse," "made bond-servants to God." But our present concern is with the way in which the truth of the Vital Union bears on this holy separation; *Life in Christ* coming out into *Christ in Life*, in respect of this inner detachment of the believer.

I scarcely need point out in much detail how it does so. The mere statement of the facts about it carries at once with it this deep, tender, searching inference. I am "joined unto the Lord, one Spirit." I live by "holding the Head," and deriving life and strength from Him, out of His fulness, in close and growing contact with Him, in "growth into Him." I am a being so related to Him that a separation from Him destroys altogether my true *raison d'être*. Imagine a branch cut off and thrown upon the garden-path, and claiming to be a thing having a purpose and a reason in its being. Imagine a finger amputated from the body, and claiming to be a substantive body. And even so imagine, if it were possible, a

believing Christian dislocated from Jesus Christ and claiming to lead for one moment a true life, with a faculty, a reason, and an end! The imagery of the Gospels and Epistles, the language about branch and limb, is directed expressly against such a mistake. Other figures might have given the thought of life, and of life imparted from a Divine source; but these give also, and inseparably, the thought of life maintained by contact with that source, and no other, and (especially in the imagery of the Head and Limb) life essentially appropriated, devoted, separated, to the purposes, not of the Limb, but of the Head. Truly to recollect this relation of ours to Jesus Christ, and truly to accept it and put it into conscious life and work, is a deep secret of that internal separation of which we are thinking. And, like so much else in the Scripture doctrine of the sanctification of the saints, it is a positive, not a negative, secret. The separation is not wrought *in vacuum*, but into Jesus Christ. It is not merely "touch not, taste not, handle not," but "you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" "set your affection on things above, where Christ is,

seated at the right hand of God," whilst also He is "in you, the hope of glory."

We observed last week how every sacred truth of our interest in Christ for acceptance, our peace before God's infinitely holy Law, and so forth, is (not confused, or replaced, but) brought home by the truth of the holy vital Union. We may say the same here, with respect to its power over all the large range of Scripture precepts of holiness; all that bids us "be separate," and "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, carrying on the completion of holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1); all that bids us "touch not the unclean thing;" "live not unto ourselves, but" altogether and always "unto Him that for us died and rose again." Many a reason, supremely reasonable, does the Scripture give us for so living separate from self and sin; many a motive, profoundly moving, in the sphere of gratitude, and affection, and hope, and right. But underneath them all, connecting itself as a chain of life with them all, is this truth of *Life in Christ.* Believing Christian, the free grace of God has brought you into

a personal and vital contact, divinely real, with Him whose work for you presents these motives, and whose precepts about your inner as well as outer action are so explicit and so absolutely authoritative. You, the recipient of motive and precept, are spiritually one with Him, "joined unto Him, one Spirit;" possessed, because of Him, of the resources of that regenerate nature which is no abstraction, but the life and strength of the glorified Head conveyed daily and hourly to you by the Holy Spirit. Your reception is, indeed, always imperfect here, in the mystery of the results of the Fall. But your contact none the less is real, and your reception may be made indefinitely larger, freer, and more continuous by the same Spirit who effected the contact, and "by" whom you are to "walk" as well as "live." He who bids you be separate from the interests, ambitions, and vanities of self is He who by His Spirit dwells in your heart by faith. He who bids you lay down upon His sacred altar your dearest affection, your most delighful pursuit, your most gainful occupation, *in respect of any rivalry of these things with His claims*, any

reluctance in them to be submitted entirely to His mind and views, is He who "sticketh closer than a brother" in a union with your being which has no parallel save in the heaven of heavens; a union in which eternal life and tenderest personal love run for ever into each other and into you. He who calls you to an internal detachment from the imaginations that defile you, from the self-will and the self-ful anger or impatience that becloud and embitter you, speaks to you about it all not only from the throne (as He does), but also from the depth of that "inner man" which His Spirit has "strengthened" that He may dwell there; speaks from "the midst of His enemies" and yours. He does not, as from a distant height, bid you attack them, encouraged only by His notice and approval. He is present to be your separating power, because of His union with your inmost self.

In the light and strength of this great Scripture truth, then, let us "come out and be separate," in no cold solitude, but in Jesus Christ, in whom we live, who lives in us. He is nearer than all circumstances. He is more

internal than even all temptations. He is able to be in fact, as well as of course in right, the central point of every believing life, and to detach it, in a true and blessed sense—never interfering with humiliation and confession—from the life of self and sin. As sure as His word is truth, He is able to be thus "in life," day by day, for all His true people. Be their callings in His providence what they may be, He can place Himself at the middle point of thought, purpose, and plan. He can so occupy that point, for the Christian merchant, or lawyer, or doctor, as that the love of gain and of fame, for its own sake, shall be "mortified," every day and hour, by His presence; by that peaceful, powerful, living *positive*. And who can estimate the new facility and decision which would come into the interior of many an estimable life, and so into its outward work and witness for Christ, if but that one work were truly done within, the "mortification" of those two loves? And Christ can so occupy the central point for the Christian minister of Word and Sacraments as that the cancer of jealousy and vanity (twin evils, opposite sides of one

evil) shall be effectually healed; and so, too, the secret sloth, so apt to seize the spirit in a life and calling whose very sacredness brings special possibilities of minimizing exertion. He can so occupy the centre as that the man, be he what he may be in himself and his surroundings of duty, shall in a large and blessed sense, in the full daylight of real life in modern times, "see all in God, and God in all, and that in the Christian sense of "seeing" and of "GOD." And this is the inmost element of separation.

"Let us give ourselves up to God," says Fénelon, in one of his *Meditations for a Month*, "without reserve or apprehension of danger. He alone will fill our heart, which the world has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will take nothing from us but what makes us unhappy. He will alter little (very possibly) in our actions, and only correct the motive of them, by making them all to be referred to Himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent actions shall become exercises of virtue. Then we shall cheerfully behold death approach as the beginning of life immortal; and, as St. Paul speaks, 'we shall

not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.' "

I was permitted a few days ago to see a letter written by an eminent and beloved Christian, recently laid on what seemed to be the bed of death, now in some degree restored. "He made," so ran one sentence, "the valley of the shadow of death a lighted place for me, by letting me find Him, the Lord of Life, to be infinitely nearer than death, when death was so near." Such be our experience too in due time; a separation in death to Jesus Christ. And let it be approached through a holy intimacy with Him in a separation to Him in life. Amen.

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—IV.

By the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, M.A.,
Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

CHRIST IN LIFE; LIFE IN CHRIST.—IV.

FROM the separating power of the realized truth of Life in Christ we pass to-day to the thought of its power to unite the Christian to things around him, to give him contact and sympathy with circumstances.

Once more, however, let me emphasize the considerations of last week. The internal detachment we spoke of then is a thing so wholly supernatural in its reason and its process that we may well be allowed to assert to ourselves its sacred necessity again and again. It is necessity indeed. Whatever else is important to a true life lived according to the will of God, this is necessary ; a separation of soul and will to Jesus Christ, in the power of our redemption by His blood to be His property, and of our union by His Spirit with Him to be His living limbs. As this separation is realized in our con-

sciousness and carried into our spiritual practice, so shall we grow in the exercise of that influence which resides in freedom, in "not being brought under the power" (1 Cor. vi. 12) of circumstances, in acting upon them from a position which is in fact above them.

Of such detachment, in and to Jesus Christ, we see a noble illustration in the closing words of the Epistle to the Galatians (vi. 17), "Let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks (the brand, the *stigmata*) of the Lord Jesus." St. Paul is separated to the heavenly Master as his purchased and branded property; therefore he calmly warns off the intrusion of men from his region of witness and of work. The realization of his indissoluble connection with Christ, and it alone, gives him the instinct and tone—not of petulant displeasure, but of immovable decision, of quiet authority, amidst the conflicting voices of dispute and opposition. And the same secret, and the same power, appear later in the same man's experience (Phil. i. 15–24). There he has to encounter a double strain of circumstances; conduct to the last degree trying on the part of certain professing Christians, and

the suspense of his own life or death upon the caprice or delays of a pagan judge. He rises, or rather he already stands, superior to both temptations; he is not exasperated, nor is he anxious. And the secret is, that he is united to Jesus Christ in a way which makes Jesus Christ all in all to him. "Christ is preached"; "to me to live is Christ;" "to depart is to be with Christ;" "my earnest expectation and my hope is, that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

St. Paul understood indeed the great secret of internal detachment. And the secret is an open secret. It is not locked up within the privileges of apostleship and inspiration, nor, again, within the prerogatives of genius. It is hidden in Jesus Christ, and to be discovered by entering upon union with Him, and then examining the treasures laid up in Him for the man united to Him, and separated by that uniting from the bondage of all else.

The name and example of the Apostle leads us by a just and beautiful transition to that other side of truth which we are considering to-day. If St. Paul was as truly detached from circum-

stances, in one respect, as perhaps any redeemed man ever was, in another respect he threw himself into circumstances, and felt and handled them, and acted upon them, to an extraordinary degree. One brief period of seclusion, if it was seclusion, he spent in "Arabia." Then, till the end of his days, he was never alone; immersed in the most miscellaneous intercourse; in communication, ay, and in living touch, with endless differences of character; applying a heart of fraternal and paternal sympathy to the effort to "save some," and to "the care of all the Churches."

In this, too, the great Saint is an example for all saints. His detachment was of the essence of the Gospel; and equally his attachment; his sympathy, and insight, and interest; his response to everything that came really in his path of service.

Christian, recognise and realize this fact of Life in Christ, of Christ in Life. You are not a St. Paul in range of natural capacity, in vastness of influence, in height of spiritual authority. But quite as truly as St. Paul you are in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Life. And for you

quite as truly as for him it is the will of God that you should expose yourself to the circumstances of His choice, not seclude yourself from them. The New Testament does not recognise the hermitage. It nowhere contemplates with approval, or rather, it nowhere considers the existence of a life spent in educating itself in a solitary and abstract sanctity. It calls the disciple out into the life of home, the life of the Church, the life so far lived in the world that the world at least can see it, touch it, apply its microscope to it, and try to understand it. It reminds the man whose "affection is set on things above," whose "life is hid with Christ in God," that he owes loyalty and tribute to the State, that he is bound to think about and pray for the powers that be; in short, that he is called to attend willingly and earnestly to every form of relative duty; to be the model married partner, and parent, and child, and master, and servant, and subject. I need not, however, dilate upon this; it is so conspicuous, so prominent in the New Testament foreground. Only let the fact be pressed home on conscience as well as on memory. The follower of Christ who

spends his hours in "self-culture" of any sort *for its own sake* is just so far not a Christian. Be it mental information and elaboration, be it spiritual self-protection and seclusion, if it terminates in itself, it is for him unlawful. He is detached from the separate interests of self decisively and impartially, in His attachment to Jesus Christ; and to Jesus Christ accordingly must all the possessions and all the training of his personality be always referred. And most certainly, if he listens to Him to whom he belongs, he will be always hearing a voice behind him saying, "Live for others because for Me; spend for others what you have in trust from Me: your means, your knowledge, your strength, your heart." The Christian as such cannot for one day shut out that claim. Whether he works at the moment or rests, it is to others, because it is "unto the Lord."

It is indeed most true that this great conspicuous principle of the Gospel has its limitations in exercise. Beyond question the Christian is not meant to be always thinking articulate thought of "others." From time to time his duty as well as joy and rest will be to contem-

plate and adore his God and Redeemer with a directness and isolation of worship such as might be paid if he were the only created personality in existence. And when he does go out to others and their interests in definite thought and purpose, it will be (in almost all conceivable cases) under some inevitable limits drawn by his own time, capacities, and knowledge. He will lose rather than gain by straining after a display of "interest in everything;" leaving manifest "duties that lie near," perhaps, in order to exhibit the width of his sympathies in some field of inquiry or activity which his path (I mean God's path chosen for him) does not really cross. Many an earnest and devoted life dissipates not a little of its proper strength and solid usefulness in such an effort. Many a disciple, for instance, forgets that few things so powerfully attract the world's attention and respect as an unaffected, but unmistakable, unworldliness; and so he wastes time and power in misdirected efforts to be "all things unto all men," where it would have been better for the very purpose in view to watch over and develop his own intimacy with Jesus Christ. But all this leaves

untouched the great principle now before us. Notwithstanding all these reserves, the Christian is designed, and constructed, and sent, to be a light in the world, salt in the earth. He is to welcome, not to shun, human intercourse and interests, as such, as his field of life and work for God. Detached from worldly "love of the world, and of the things in the world" (1 John ii. 15), he is meant all the while divinely to "love the world" as his heavenly Father loved it (John iii. 16).

He is to watch over his inner separation, above all things that he may be the stronger for a true participation with his fellows. As regards outward separation, he may have occasion —I think he often *will* have occasion, to incur the brand of "antiquated" *Puritanism*—a word of no ignoble history. But he will seek never to expose himself to the just charge of *Pharisaism;* "I am holier than thou; God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are." It is one thing to be decided; it is an altogether different thing to be unsympathetic, to be separated in an isolation self-righteous and censorious.

As we close, let us recur to the double motto

of these papers: *Life in Christ; Christ in Life.* We set out with that deep, radiant truth of revelation—and of revelation alone—the believer's Vital Union with Jesus Christ; his position and possessions as he is, by grace, "in the Lord." With it let us end. It is the root and secret equally of a true separation and a true sympathy. Are we indeed "members of His body"? Are we indeed related to Him as our fingers, as our lips, are to the centres of physical and of mental action? Our fingers, our lips, are appropriated to us by that relation as they are to nothing else; they are separated. But they are also, by that relation, connected with all the purposes and interests of heart and head. They have to be, and are, busy day by day with a thousand contacts and conversations, very probably most miscellaneous, certainly not always physically pleasant, and certainly very often fatiguing. But they, fingers and lips, exist for the use of the ruling powers of the being; they fulfil the law and function of their existence; and it is their own health and good to do so; to spend and to be spent in proportion to the energy, and activity, and largeness

of intercourse, of the central power. Now we, who belong to Jesus Christ, and are "joined to Him, one Spirit," stand thus vitally related to a Head whose interests and whose energies are indeed wide, deep, and various; whose tender mercies are over all His works. When He walked on earth, He scattered round Him daily proofs of His sacred sympathy with not only the eternal but the temporal needs of man; with the sorrows of not the many only, but the few; with the needs of the weakest, and of the lowest of the fallen. He was loyal to the home of Nazareth; happy in the home of Bethany, and weeping beside its grave; divinely kind at the marriage of Cana; attentive in His deep weariness to the hunger of the multitude in the desert; watchful over His mother amidst the agonies of the Atonement; always and everywhere "having compassion of the ignorant, and them that were out of the way;" detached in an absolute sense from the bondage alike of man's plaudits and of his revilings, and yet open to every appeal for love and mercy. Such was, and is, the Head. And we are separated to Him, and united to Him, as His limbs; to

go where He goeth, to do what He pleaseth. Separate from sinners, He yet was no recluse. In our union with Him lies at once the law of our life as a life of love and duty in the world of concrete circumstances, and the hidden power to carry out that duty, and to feed, so that it shall be ever burning on the altar, that fire of love.

CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL OF THE WORKSHOP.

By the Rev. Sir EMILIUS LAURIE, *Bart., B.D.,*
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CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL OF THE WORKSHOP.

"Is not this the carpenter's son?"—*Matt.* xiii. 55.
"Is not this the carpenter?"—*Mark* vi. 3.
"Nazareth, where He had been brought up."—*Luke* iv. 16.

FROM these and other passages we learn that our blessed Lord spent the greater part, probably the first thirty years, of His earthly life at Nazareth; for He there followed His reputed father's trade; and that He was commonly known as "the Carpenter," and "the Carpenter's Son." Nazareth is one of the few places in Palestine which possesses an undisputed identity. The northern side of the central plain of Esdraelon, the battle-field of Palestine, the scene of Gideon's defeat of the Midianites, of Barak's defeat of Sisera, of Necho's defeat of Josiah, and, in later days, of Napoleon's, or rather Kleber's defeat of the Turks, is bounded by a lofty limestone cliff,

many hundred feet in height. From the summit of this cliff, and at right angles to it, runs a long shallow valley, such as is often seen in the chalk formations of our southern counties; and on the western slope of this valley, at a distance of from one to two miles from the cliff, lies the modern village, or small town, of en-Nâzirah, the unquestioned representative of the ancient Nazareth. The little valley is fertile, filled with cornfields, gardens, and fruit-trees; the familiar hollyhock is there, and hedges of wild cactus. From the surrounding hills a magnificent view is obtained, almost unequalled in a country which, small in extent and varied in outline, is peculiarly rich in scenes of surpassing beauty. To the north are seen the spurs of the Lebanon ranges, with the snowy height of Mount Hermon standing out as a sentinel and keeping watch over the land; to the east may be traced the depression of the Lake of Galilee and the Jordan Valley; whilst near at hand is the conical Tabor, and beyond it the dark range of the trans-Jordan mountains; Mount Carmel rises to the westward, with glimpses here and there of the Mediterranean Sea; whilst to the

south stretches the fertile plain of Esdraelon, and far away the hills of Samaria and Southern Palestine.

In this secluded village the Saviour spent the greater part of His earthly existence. The scenes which met His eye, and with which for thirty years He was familiar, were probably much the same as those which present themselves to the eye of the modern traveller; the view which I have just referred to must have been one upon which He often gazed, and in the unchanging East it is thus not difficult to reproduce in imagination some of the leading features of the private life of the Son of God.

My subject, however, limits me to one section of that life, the time passed and the work wrought in the workshop at Nazareth. What teachings come forth from that obscure abode; what lessons may be learned from our Lord's life as "the Carpenter"? Perhaps we may state the thesis thus:—The Carpenter's shop at Nazareth, *the Workshop of the Gospel:* the Gospel which came forth from it, *the Gospel of the Workshop.*

I.—The Workshop of the Gospel.

Of course, strictly speaking, the Gospel did not come forth from the workshop of Nazareth. It sprang from a far higher source. It formed part of "the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour" (Art. xvii.). The Gospel was no afterthought, devised to meet an unexpected contingency; no plan of deliverance suddenly invented to counteract the unlooked-for consequences of the Fall. There are no unforeseen contingencies in the government of God. "Known unto Him are all His works from the beginning of the world." The counsels of the Most High ran from eternity; but when they came within the sphere of time, and the mighty drama began to unroll itself, then in a very true sense the workshop of Nazareth became the workshop of the Gospel. The august per-

sonality of Jesus Christ is the centre of the Gospel; nay, rather, it is the Gospel. Christ is Christianity; and the life of Christ, as lived by Him upon earth, is a prime factor in the great scheme of redemption. Thus the unfolding, the training, the perfecting of that life enters largely into the essence of the Gospel, and it is important to ascertain where and how that life received its development.

Certainly, if we had been told beforehand that the Son of God was to take man's nature, and in that nature to pass thirty-three years upon earth, we should not have selected the Galilean workshop as His home during the larger, or indeed any, portion of that period. We might have thought perhaps of the palace of kings, or, more likely still, of His Father's Temple at Jerusalem, the presumed abode of learning and of piety, as the least unseemly resting places for the incarnate Son; but the boldest imagination, the wildest fancy, would never have assigned to the Son of God the humble calling of a carpenter, or have ventured to suggest a village shop as the fitting abode of Deity. Such, however, were the circumstances

under which the life of the Lord Jesus unfolded itself. The fact is referred to quite casually in the Gospels; it was indeed only owing to the perplexity of the rude villagers of Nazareth that it was mentioned at all; but the fact stands recorded, and is so recorded for our learning. It is a very simple but a very instructive fact, that by far the greater part of our Lord's earthly life was passed in the workshop of Nazareth.

Of the inferences to be drawn from this fact, I select one: one which meets, I think, a not uncommon difficulty in the spiritual life.

It is often felt by very earnest Christians that the exalted and heavenly life to which Christianity calls us is inconsistent with the plain prosaic life to which we commonly stand pledged. The true Christian is invested with the high privileges of Divine adoption; he lives in mystical union with the Son of God; he is a temple of the Holy Ghost; his citizenship is in heaven; his affection is to be set on things above; his life is hid with Christ in God. Such is the ideal, such is the true life of a real Christian. But where and how is this life to be

passed? In the sanctuary of God; in the chamber of prayer; in the solitude of the desert? No! Worship is good, prayer is good, solitude is good; but the greater portion of each Christian's life must be spent in the pursuit of a secular calling. In the mart, the office, the field, the workshop, hard, dry, secular facts, innumerable figures, bargains, sales, purchases, manual labour, exhausting toil, fill up the daily lives of many of God's children, and the heavenly life has to be lived amid the noise and dust of the most commonplace earthly existence. But can this be in accordance with the will of God? Can the spiritual life receive its highest development amid such unspiritual surroundings? Must not he who would live the higher, the very highest, life turn his back upon the workshop, and on some Mount of Transfiguration seek to live in habitual communion with God? So have thought some of the noblest of God's saints, and have betaken themselves accordingly to the cloister or the desert. So seem to think some ardent Christians in the present day, and, forthwith forsaking their secular calling, they seek as they

suppose a purer atmosphere in which to live the consecrated life. But this is not the teaching which comes to us from the workshop of Nazareth. Of course any man may have mistaken his vocation, and after trial and full consideration may feel it right to change it; but not, I conceive, on the grounds too often urged—that a secular calling is inconsistent with the highest development of the spiritual life. Our Lord's perfect life in the workshop of Nazareth is a standing protest against such an assumption. There He learned obedience; there He maintained uninterrupted communion with His Father in heaven; there He perfectly and ceaselessly did His Father's will; and if amid the humble and uneventful labours of a village shop the Son of God found a fitting sphere for the development of the only faultless life that has ever been lived upon earth, may not we be content that our poor lives should be subjected to the same conditions and nursed in the same homely school?

We find then, I think, in the workshop of Nazareth an answer to those who think lightly of a secular calling. The labour of the hands has

there received its highest consecration ; there is no inconsistency between the discharge of secu lar duties and the noblest service—between a life of manual labour and a life hid with Christ in God.

The carpenter's shop at Nazareth was therefore in a very true sense the workshop of the Gospel ; but the Gospel which came forth from it, embodied in the life and teaching, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, was, emphatically,

II.—The Gospel of the Workshop.

It is here that the Gospel of Christ comes at once into collision with some phases of modern thought, or with what at least claims to represent such thought. We find ourselves in a world in which great inequalities of rank and fortune undoubtedly exist ; there are the rich, and there are the poor ; and in the extremes on either side there are contrasts painful to witness and impossible to defend. The cause of this state of things is traced by many to bad laws ; such inequality, they say, must be swept away at all hazards ; all men are equal, equal in their

rights, they ought to be equal in their possessions; and laws ought so to be recast as to secure this result. This is the Gospel of many modern reformers; this is the Gospel which is held up as the Gospel for the poor; and a Gospel which appeals so strongly to some of the lower parts of our nature is hailed by many as the true Evangel.

Now this might be a Gospel, if it were not a lie, a cruel misleading lie; based upon a denial of the fundamental facts of human nature, and utterly incapable of raising that nature to a higher level. Social inequality always has existed, and always will and must exist; just because of the physical inequality of man. Place every man upon an equality to-day, and inequality would begin to-morrow; place a hundred men in an island with an absolute equality of possession, and in a week's time the principle of inequality would be in full operation. Skill, industry, thrift, on the one hand would have contended with ignorance, idleness, and waste; the result of the conflict would be at once apparent, and inequality would have become the rule not the exception. You cannot com-

bat these facts; laws cannot reverse them; they lie deep down in the very nature of man, and that is no Gospel which professes to ignore them.

Nor is this teaching only false; it is cruel and misleading; it holds out expectations which can never be realized; for bread it gives a stone, and in place of an egg it offers a scorpion. In great social convulsions the weakest have always suffered the most; the paralysis of social disturbance, which checks the flow of capital, immediately affects the labour market and deprives the poor of employment; it is from the homes of the fatherless and the widow that the cry of destitution first comes forth, and the first effect of this so-called Gospel is to increase and accentuate the evil which it professes to cure.

We claim, then, for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus that it, and it alone, is the Gospel of the workshop, and that for two reasons.

(1) *The Workshop needs the Gospel.*—The working man shares with every member of the human race the heritage of a fallen nature, and for that no healing is found save in the Gospel

of Christ. But the cares of life press with special severity upon the working classes. With them there is often a continual struggle for existence; and if their earnings commonly suffice to supply them with daily bread, they live so near the border line which separates them from actual want, that any failure of work, an attack of illness, or any of those changes which in a highly complicated state of society are continually taking place, suffice to render them destitute. Surely then the workshop needs the Gospel; "each man must bear his own burden;" but the burden, the "load" of the working man is often a heavy one, and no one can so well help him to bear it as the great burden-bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the Gospel, the life of daily toil must always be an anxious one; with it there shall be such compensations as shall sweeten and ennoble it: without the Gospel, the workshop shall at best furnish a provision for the wants of time; with it, it shall prove a training-place for the occupations of eternity.

(2) *The Gospel needs the Workshop.*—Truth through personality is the method by which

God communicates His will to man; and personality "sanctified in the truth" (John xvii. 17) is the final product of the Gospel. But, if so, the Gospel needs a field in which to carry out its beneficent design; and that field is commonly found in the life of honest industry. It was so in the case of our blessed Lord. The only perfect life that has ever been lived upon earth was mainly passed, not in the abode of learned leisure, not in the solitude of the desert, not even in the Temple of God, but in a village shop. The Gospel made use of a workshop in which to mould and perfect the human character of its Founder; it was there that the Lord Jesus was trained for His great work; nor did He quit it until He entered upon the final stage of His earthly ministry. Christ has thus by His example consecrated the field of honest labour as a fitting training-place for heaven; there, in the fullest sense of the word, His servants may serve Him; there, in the letter no less than in the spirit, they may follow the example and conform to the image of their risen Lord.

In the workshop of Nazareth, therefore, we

may thus perhaps find an answer to some of the pressing social questions of the day. Christianity is a social religion, designed to work a social revolution, to raise and purify the social condition of mankind; but it does so, not by destroying society, but by regenerating it; not by reducing every member of the body politic to the dead level of uniformity, but by teaching each member to do aright the work that belongs to him; not by preaching revolution and seeking to roll back the world into chaos, but by establishing in men's hearts those principles of truth, righteousness, and love, which, just so far as they prevail, turn this fallen world of ours into a paradise. And Jesus Christ laid the foundation for this beneficent work when He lived the greater portion of His life as a labouring man; when, beginning at the bottom of the social scale, He accepted and ennobled a life of manual toil; when, renouncing the countless sources of supply that were open to Him, He earned His daily bread in the workshop of Nazareth.

Nor do we find in this homely example an answer only to some of our modern social diffi-

culties; we also learn from it how close an alliance may exist between industry and piety, between even the rudest forms of daily labour and the purest aspirations, the highest attainments of the consecrated life. The workshop is a large word. With few, we may say with no, exceptions, every man has his workshop. The merchant, the tradesman, the soldier, the sailor, the statesman, the student, the professional man, each has his field of labour, his workshop in which to carry on his daily toil. And if it be said that some few are exempted from this common lot and may, if they will, spend their days in idleness, I answer that the workshop of the idle man is a scene of unending toil. Rest after labour is sweet, but the idle man knows no rest; the change to work would be refreshing, but idleness refuses to work; the wheel goes round unceasingly, the door turns ever upon its hinges, the soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing.

Given, then, to each of us the workshop in which to carry on the work of life, there need be no collision between the two sides of that life, the human and the Divine. The presence

of God may be as truly enjoyed, the love of Christ as truly felt, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit as truly realized in the workshop as in the sanctuary; nay, it is there that God would have each one of us fight out the battle of life; not shirking duty, not restlessly pursuing change; but whatsoever the hand findeth to do, doing it with our might. And if at times discouraged and cast down, let the thought of that Galilean workshop come to our aid, the thought of Him who laboured on from year to year in patient, uneventful, unrequited toil; nay, rather of Him who has ascended from the workshop of Nazareth to the throne of the universe, and thence dispenses grace to His toilers, to every man according to his need.

CHRIST IN THE SICK ROOM.

By the RIGHT REVEREND C. J. RYLE, D.D.,
Lord Bishop of Liverpool.

CHRIST IN THE SICK ROOM.

"Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister on the boil, and he shall recover."—*Isa.* xxxviii. 21.

SICKNESS, disease, decay, and death are the common lot of all mankind without exception. You have a striking proof of this in the chapter from which my text is taken. The Holy Ghost shows us a king and ruler of men, a dweller in palaces, a possessor of all that money can obtain, a good man, a holy man, a friend of God, laid low by disease like the poorest man in the kingdom. Hear what the Holy Ghost says, "In those days Hezekiah was sick unto death."

This is the old story. It is the history of every child of Adam for the last 6,000 years, except Enoch and Elijah. It is as true of the infant who only lives a few hours as it is true of

Methuselah who lived 969 years. The story of every patriarch in the 5th of Genesis concludes with the simple words "and he died." There is no discharge in this war. Sooner or later all die. There is no exemption for any rank or class or condition. High and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, learned and unlearned, kings and their subjects, saints and sinners, all alike are liable to disease and all must submit to the king of terrors. The admirals and generals who have left behind a world-wide reputation, the statesmen who have swayed senates and made indelible marks on the history of their own time, are all carried one after another to the grave. Pitt and Fox are lying in Westminster Abbey, and Wellington and Nelson in St. Paul's Cathedral. Communists and levellers may go on railing at landlords and rich men for ever. But they cannot deny that the landlords and rich men, in spite of all their privileges, enjoy no immunity from sickness and death.

No medical skill can prevent this. Our physicians and surgeons are unwearied in their efforts to find new remedies and modes of treatment. They compass sea and land in order to

prevent disease, and discover specifics, diminish pain, and lengthen life. But in spite of vaccination and quinine and chloroform, in spite of all that allopathy and homœopathy can do, there is something which your ablest doctors find beyond their reach. When the time appointed by God comes, they cannot keep men and women alive.

After all, there is nothing wonderful in this. The tabernacle or tent in which our soul lives, the human body, is a most frail and complicated machine. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is not a part of us which is not liable to disease. When I think of the variety of ailments which may assail our frame, I do not wonder so much that we die at last as I do that we live so long.

But whence comes this liability to sickness, disease, and death? How are we to account for it? This is a question which will arise in many minds, and it is one which ought to be answered. Perfection is the ordinary mark of all God's handiwork—perfection in the heaven above us and the earth beneath us—perfection in the movements of a planet like Jupiter, and perfection in a fly's wing or a blade of grass.

Look through a telescope or microscope at anything which God created and you find nothing defective. How then can we account for the power of disease, decay, and death over the body of man?

There is only one book that supplies an answer to this question. That book is the Bible. The fall of man at the beginning has brought sin into the world, and sin has brought with it the curse of sickness, suffering, and pain. These are not things which God created at the beginning. They are the consequences of man's transgression. To suppose that a perfect God could deliberately create imperfection, is a supposition too monstrous to be believed. It is man that is to blame, and not God. The countless bodily sufferings that we see are the just consequence of man's original disobedience. Here to my mind lies one among many proofs that the Bible is given by inspiration of God. It accounts for many things which the Deist cannot explain. When I see a little infant, too young to know good from evil, convulsed with bodily pain and hovering between life and death in a weeping mother's arms, I should be utterly

puzzled and confounded if I did not believe the Bible. I should ask myself, "Where is the justice and mercy of allowing such distress? Where is the wisdom and love of the Creator?" But when I turn to the Bible the mysterious problem is solved. I learn that suffering is the result of Adam's fall. That infant would not have suffered if Adam had not sinned.

In the next place I ask you to learn from this chapter that sickness is not an unmixed evil.

That King Hezekiah received spiritual benefit from his illness I think there can be no doubt. The beautiful and pathetic language of his "writing," which Isaiah was inspired to record, places that beyond question. The good man saw things in his sickness which he had never seen clearly and fully in the days of health. "By these things," he says, "men live." He might have added, "By these things men learn."

I do not say that sickness always does good. Alas! We ministers know to our sorrow that it frequently does no good at all. Too often we see men and women, after recovering from a long and dangerous illness, more hardened and

irreligious than they were before. Too often they return to the world, if not to sin, with more eagerness and zest than ever; and the impressions made on their conscience in the hour of sickness are swept away like children's writing on the sand of the sea-shore when the tide flows. But I do say that sickness ought to do us good. And I do say that God sends it in order to do us good. It is a friendly letter from heaven. It is a knock at the door of conscience. It is the voice of the Saviour asking to be let in. Happy is he who opens the letter and reads it, who hears the knock and opens the door, who welcomes Christ to the sick room. Come now, and let me plead with you a little about this, and show you a few of the lessons which He by sickness would teach us.

(*a*) Sickness is meant to make us think, to remind us that we have a soul as well as a body, an immortal soul, a soul that will live for ever in happiness or in misery; and that if this soul is not saved we had better never have been born.

(*b*) Sickness is meant to teach us that there is a world beyond the grave, and that the world we now live in is only a training-place for an-

other dwelling, where there will be no decay, no sorrow, no tears, no misery, and no sin.

(*c*) Sickness is meant to make us look at our past lives honestly, fairly, and conscientiously. Am I ready for my great change if I should not get better? Do I repent truly of my sins? Are my sins forgiven and washed away in Christ's blood? Am I prepared to meet God?

(*d*) Sickness is meant to make us see the emptiness of the world and its utter inability to satisfy the highest and deepest wants of the soul.

(*e*) Sickness is meant to send us to our Bibles. That blessed Book, in the days of health, is too often left on the shelf, becomes the safest place in which to put a bank-note, and is never opened from January to December. But sickness often brings it down from the shelf and throws new light on its pages.

(*f*) Sickness is meant to make us pray. Too many, I fear, never pray at all, or they only rattle over a few hurried words morning and evening without thinking what they do. But prayer often becomes a reality when the valley of the shadow of death is in sight.

(*g*) Sickness is meant to make us repent and

break off our sins. If we will not hear the voice of mercies, God sometimes makes us "hear the rod."

(*h*) Sickness is meant to draw us to Christ. Naturally we do not see the full value of that blessed Saviour. We secretly fancy that our prayers, good deeds, and sacrament-receiving will save our souls. But when flesh begins to fail, the absolute necessity of a Redeemer, a Mediator, and an Advocate with the Father, stands out before men's eyes like fire, and makes them understand those words, "Simply to Thy cross I cling," as they never did before. Sickness has done this for many; they have found Christ in the sick room.

(*i*) Last, but not least, sickness is meant to make us feeling and sympathizing towards others. By nature we are all far below our blessed Master's example, who had not only a hand to help all, but a heart to feel for all. None, I suspect, are so unable to sympathize as those who have never had trouble themselves; and none are so able to feel as those who have drunk most deeply the cup of pain and sorrow.

Men and brethren, when your time comes to be ill, I beseech you not to forget what the illness means. Beware of fretting and murmuring and complaining, and giving way to an impatient spirit. Regard your sickness as a blessing in disguise, a good and not an evil, a friend and not an enemy. No doubt we should all prefer to learn spiritual lessons in the school of ease and not under the rod. But rest assured that God knows better than we do how to teach us. The light of the last day will show you that there was a meaning and a "need be" in all your bodily ailments. The lessons that we learn on a sick-bed, when we are shut out from the world, are often lessons which we should never learn elsewhere. Settle it down in your minds, that, however much you may dislike it, sickness is not an unmixed evil.

CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S FRIEND.

By the VERY REVEREND W. R. FREMANTLE, D.D., *Dean of Ripon.*

CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S FRIEND.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends."—*St. John* xv. 15.

IN the passage I have quoted from St. John xv. 15, there is a marked and obvious contrast between the words "servants" and "friends." By the latter our Lord expresses the very near and intimate relation in which He stands to those who do His commandment. For there is no union of loving sympathy so close as that of a friend. It is the climax in the order of influences which may be exerted over a man as set out in Deut. xiii. 6, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul;" and so in Prov. xviii. 24, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." There are other pas-

sages which I might quote, such as that declaring the love of Jonathan for David, who loved him as his own soul, all implying that there is a bond of deeper and more intense affection in the idea of a friend than any other relationship can express. Hence it is that Abraham, the father of the faithful, is more than once called the Friend of God; and not only so, but the Almighty Father speaks of him as "Abraham, my friend." And in Isaiah lvi. 4, 5, the gracious promise is made to those who keep His Sabbaths and choose the things that please Him and take hold of His covenant, "Even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." The disciple, the servant, the child, or the brother may have their endearing bonds of love, but Jesus is not content to reveal Himself as the Master and Lord, as the Saviour and Brother alone, but also as the Friend:—"Henceforth I call you not servants: I have called you friends."

Notice the moment at which these words

were spoken. It was after the Paschal feast. Jesus had instituted and partaken of the Lord's Supper with His disciples. He had broken bread and had given the cup, and had sat with them upon terms of most holy and loving communion. He had washed their feet, He was one with them and they with Him, and so, in the discourses which followed, there was an unfolding of His heart of hearts to them; He calls them henceforth "friends," illustrating and expanding what He had said before, ver. 13, 14, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." And here He lays down love as the true and all-absorbing principle of obedience to His holy will: "Henceforth I call you not servants," etc.

But our Lord adds the reasons for giving this title of privilege to His disciples, for the term servant implies—

(1) That he is ignorant of his Master's motives and designs. He receives the command to do this or that, without knowing the reason for which or the object for which it is

given. He is in a condition of comparative ignorance and distance.

(2) He is under the law of bondage, for the word, as in the Revised Version margin, is "bond servant;" and he is, therefore, actuated by fear and by compulsion. There may be a sense of duty and of righteous obligation, but there is no liberty.

(3) He is influenced in his efforts to obedience by a mercenary and therefore by a self-righteous motive, for if he performs his appointed task he looks for his wages; if he does more than this and does it in a manner exceeding the ordinary standard of work, he looks for the reward of praise from his master; and if he obtains this he sets it down to the merit of his own performance, and not to that master's generosity and goodwill. In a religious point of view, therefore, it cannot be said that such a state of mind would be favourable to the cultivation of those graces which adorn the Christian character; the lack of fellowship, the condition of bondage, and the spirit of self-righteousness, are all opposed to the privileges and liberty of the Gospel. As St. Paul expresses it—"Ye have

not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"—all is grace and love. But now let us look at the terms upon which a friend stands to his friend.

(i.) He has free access to him at all times. He has the entry of his home, and of his ear, and of his heart. He does not go to him as an official having to make a special appointment as a matter of business, or to seek some favour at his hands in return for service rendered; but in the conscious confidence of reciprocal love he feels that he needs no excuse for intrusion or plea for claiming the attention and interests of the moment. The friend loveth at all times, and this is just what Jesus teaches when He says, "I have called you friends." For while He is the one Mediator between God and man there is no mediator between man and Christ; all have access to Him at all times, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." He is the sinner's friend; true friend of publicans and sinners, how much more the friend

of those who love Him and keep His commandments? Nothing stands between the soul and Christ; His invitation is that of a friend—"Come unto Me at all times, and under all circumstances, I will hear your prayer, I will sympathize in your sorrow, I will give you rest." And this involves :—

(ii.) The fellowship of friendship; for there is a real participation in joy and sorrow. It is not simply that He has compassion upon us in our affliction or takes pleasure in our rejoicing, but He participates with us in it. Jesus could not do otherwise, for He took our nature upon Him that He might be made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. Thus He is touched with a feeling of all our infirmities. In all our affliction He is afflicted. "Jesus wept," and they said, "See how He loved him." The bitter persecution of St. Stephen pierces the heart of Jesus; every stone hurled at the martyr strikes the heart of Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" testifies to the oneness of Christ with His people. And compare the warning, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." So complete is

this fellowship that the friendship of Jesus involves a degree of sympathy which no one else in the whole world can exert. For He is a perfect man; and it is in the perfection of humanity that we have perfect sympathy.

(iii.) But this friendship is communicative. There is no reserve, no secret between friends —all is open and naked unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And if the servant knoweth not what his master doeth, the friend is admitted into his secret counsels. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." The friendship of God for Abraham was manifested in this way. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing that I do?" Again, we read that God spake to Moses as a man speaks face to face with his friend; and so it was with Joseph, and with David, and with Daniel, and Ezra, and Nehemiah, and with the disciples of Jesus. The gift of the Holy Ghost is for this purpose, that He might take of the things of Jesus and show them unto us, bringing to our remembrance the things that He has said unto us, showing us things to come, yea, revealing to us

what eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. Such is the measure of knowledge which the friendship of Jesus imparts. He that followeth Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall see the light of life. Jesus not only communicates His love but His light. He is the wonderful counsellor as well as the mighty God. And it is this which makes His friendship so unspeakably precious. There are times when we turn to the right hand and to the left ; refuge fails us. We look for advisers and comforters, but there is none. To whom then should we go but unto Jesus ? He has the words of eternal life, and He will not withhold the advice and the consolation we need. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shouldst go. I will guide thee with Mine eye." The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom should I be afraid ?

There is yet one other thought in the friendship of Jesus which we must not omit, and it is—

(iv.) That it is abiding and unchangeable.

We know how fickle and frail oftentimes are friendships here; how soon overclouded by suspicions or jealousy, and interrupted by prejudice and mistakes; and how it happens that chief friends are separated, the love cools down into indifference and even enmity. Out of our sins and infirmities it comes; the flesh is weak and we yield to impulses of temptation and passion. But the friendship of Jesus is superhuman, it is eternal, it is Divine. He has loved us with an everlasting love; greater love hath no man, and therefore whom He loves He loves unto the end. Once the friend of Jesus, always the friend. He would be untrue to His own name and nature if He could forget or forsake His chosen. "Can a woman forget her sucking child so that she may not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any

other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And now what is the lesson we are to learn from this ?

(1) That Jesus is nearer to us than we are to Him—that He loves us better than we love Him. And this distance and coldness is what He desires to overcome by saying, "I call you not servants, I have called you friends. I am not come to you in the terrors and threats of Mount Sinai ; I am come to you in the grace and truth of the Gospel. I am come, not to command with the arm of power, but to constrain by the power of love." How slow of heart we are to believe His love ! Many think of Him as an adversary because they have sinned against Him and been at enmity with Him ; they count Him to be a severe and hard Master because they must give an account of their stewardship ; and thus they live on as though they were strangers, and only as upon sufferance to be reckoned in the circle of His acquaintance. But what Jesus would have us to realize is, that He is our Friend and the best

Friend we have in the world; that we should recognise this and not be content to say, "I am the friend of Jesus and wish to be reckoned among the number of His friends," but should believe the fact that He regards our obedience to His will as a proof of friendship; that He calls us, and regards us, not as servants but as friends. There is, I admit, something startling and wonderful that Jesus should speak to a poor, sinful, ignorant creature; and that such an one, conscious of infirmity and sin, with many earnest prayers seeking forgiveness and peace at the foot of the cross, should hear such words as these, "I call you not a servant, but a friend; what I desire is, that you should know that I love you." Has not this thought passed through our minds? Yes; I have believed that Jesus would be my Friend and help me through my sins and failures, but that He should condescend to call me His friend, and admit one so utterly unworthy of His favour into such a blessed communion, that is indeed wonderful. The joyful wonder finds its expression in the words of the Apostle John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we

should be called the sons of God;" and yet we have only to turn to the Lord's Supper and we have the parable in our text explained. Jesus invites the guest to His feast, all things are ready, the sacrifice has been offered, the wine is prepared, the table is furnished, the messengers have cried upon the highest places of the city, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, He saith unto him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." The King sitteth at the table, and the banner over him is love. There is a welcome for all who will come, there is fellowship and unity, there is the special communication of grace and blessing, there is the heavenly teaching and the abiding testimony of unchangeable love.

CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S COMPANION

By the Rev. George Everard, M.A.,
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CHRIST THE BELIEVER'S COMPANION.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—*Matt.* xxviii. 20.

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following."—*Mark* xvi. 20.

THE promise in the one Gospel is confirmed by the narrative in the other. The Master leaves behind a precious word of encouragement. He assures His little flock that He will be with them whithersoever they go. Then St. Mark tells how this assurance is fulfilled in the early days of the Church. Though ascended to the Father's right hand, yet He is still below. With the faithful branch He goes forth, gives might and power to the Word, and affords manifest tokens of His presence by the signs that followed. Here is our strength and comfort also: "Companionship with Christ, our strength

in work for Christ." "He who is engaged with the things of Christ with Christ should ever be."

Three things should never be forgotten by the Christian, especially as he works for the spread of Christ's kingdom on earth.

Christ *for* us, our Advocate, our Mediator, our High Priest, our Intercessor, our Representative before the throne on high, as He was our Substitute when dying upon the cross.

Christ *in* us, abiding in us by His Holy Spirit, an inner power and strength, living in us His own life over again, and thus, as the stem and root of the true Vine, making His people fruitful in every good word and work.

But a third view is not to be forgotten. Christ *with* us—our Friend, our Companion, standing ever by our side, as He was with the three young men in the furnace, as He stood by Paul when in the presence of Nero. Here is our joy and our hope, that we are not left comfortless, but the Lord Himself comes near to uphold and strengthen us by His presence.

A few years ago an eminent servant of Christ was speaking to a younger brother in the Lord's work about his experience in parochial visitation

"Can't you often see the Lord very near you? It seems to me sometimes that I have only to turn my head and look over my shoulder and I should see the Lord there." It is of companionship like this that I desire to speak.

It is worth while to compare with it our Lord's own comfort and resource when battling with the scribes and Pharisees, at the same time finding so little true sympathy, even from His own disciples. Three passages in St. John's Gospel give this very forcibly when put side by side :—

"If I judge, My judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me" (John viii. 16).

"He that sent Me is with Me : the Father hath not left Me alone ; for I do always those things that please Him" (John viii. 29).

"Ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone ; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me" (John xvi. 32).

Alone, yet not alone! So was it ever with Christ. The world against Him! Jews and Gentiles in arms to crucify Him! The little flock forsaking Him! Yet not alone, because

the Father was ever by His side. Thus would He have it with His people! Alone, yet not alone, because my Saviour, my Redeemer, is with me! Yet not the Son only, but the Father also. "My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." Wherever the Saviour is, there, too, is the Father, and the blessed Spirit, the Comforter.

Let us see how this realization of companionship with the Lord Jesus is a mighty help and strength in our work in His vineyard. It lifts the Christian worker above two of his greatest hindrances.

(i.) The fear of man and a secret craving after praise from those around—these both work in many ways to injure the testimony of the servant of Christ. They close the lips against a needful word of bold reproof. They lead the preacher to keep back subjects that are not so attractive as others. They draw him into conformity with worldly habits and customs, and thus mar the consistency of his character. But the felt presence of Christ is a mighty aid to overcome both these perils. It makes a man bold as a lion when he knows that the Almighty

Helper is near at hand. The joy of His presence gives him that inner satisfaction that casts out the love of human praise. If only the Master whispers, "It is I: be not afraid," then he can face the world's rebuke, and despise the gilded baits of flattery and self-seeking.

(ii.) The consciousness of Christ's presence, as a loving Friend and merciful Redeemer, will quicken and deepen the one great motive for Christian work. True, genuine, warm-hearted, and devoted love to Christ, growing and increasing within us—this is the great stimulus we need in everything we say or do. We want the spirit of the Apostle: "The love of Christ constraineth us." This love ought to be as a chain on the heart drawing us along, happy and willing captives in the path of holy obedience to Him. And what will form this principle within more effectually than abiding near to Christ? As Mary sat at His feet she learnt to love Him and to bring her precious box of ointment to pour upon Him. As Andrew went and abode with Christ the evening of the day when John the Baptist had pointed Him out, he learnt so to love Him that he must go and fetch his brother

Simon to see and know Him also. As John lay upon His bosom, he caught the Master's spirit; and so both his Gospel and Epistle are full of love and have proved such a precious boon to His Church in all ages. Walk in fellowship with Christ. Believe His presence with you continually. Look up to Him as ever near to uphold and bless you, and your love to Him will grow and increase, and thus your work for Him will be more according to His mind and will.

(iii.) To realize Christ with us gives firmness and steadfastness in proclaiming the truth, and forbearance and patience with those who may differ from us. In our day both of these are most essential. The truth as it is in Jesus is often hidden by error, or loses its power by men cutting out one or more of its essential features. So we need to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We need to pray that able men may be raised up to speak the truth in wisdom and power. We need to be jealous lest sacerdotal teaching should hide the freeness of Christ's Gospel, and lest rationalistic interpretations should rob us of the atoning sacrifice, the

work of the Comforter, and the glorious hopes by which the faith of God's people is inspired. Yet with this we need abounding charity and the most watchful care lest we hinder instead of forwarding our Lord's kingdom. Everything of bitterness and acrimony, harsh judgments of brethren, putting lesser matters into undue prominence, thinking that in every matter we must be right and others wrong, the popery of Protestantism which roughly tramples down everything that is not after its own mind, in short, lack of that true genuine love of the brethren and love of the image of Christ wherever we see it, this can do nothing but harm, and only makes the truth we love repulsive in the eyes of others. Here, again, comes in the value of Christ's presence with us. In His light we see light. We see the vast importance of all essential truth. We see the beauty and glory of that lowliness, gentleness, and patience that shone so brightly in Him. Let me see Christ by my side and I cannot slight the truth to which He came to witness. Neither can I willingly wound or despise the brother that is so dear to Him.

With Him near me I shall learn the true spirit of tolerance, valuing His doctrine and Word more than life; yet in His patience exercising all meekness toward all men, knowing that His truth in the end will most surely prevail.

(iv.) The worker for Christ in a position of loneliness will also be greatly strengthened by the vivid remembrance of Christ as near to him. Imagine the Christian standing alone as a witness for Christ in a retired village where there are few servants of the Lord; or when husband and wife have been working happily hand in hand, the wife is taken home and the husband is left to plod on alone; or the missionary sailing to a far distant shore away from all the helpful associations of our own land, and there surrounded by tens of thousands of heathen, and scarcely a Christian brother to speak to or to encourage him in his toil. But here again comes in the joy of Christ's presence. Remember Paul at Corinth. He had few friends, but bitter enemies. Then the Lord came to him in a vision by night and said to him, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall

set on thee to hurt thee." Remember, again, Paul at Rome. His friends forsook him when standing before his judge. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." But was he left alone? Was he utterly forsaken? Was there no sympathizing friend to cheer him? "Nevertheless the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Let this be your comfort likewise, in every lonely hour. You may look and look in vain for one friendly countenance, you may long for one word of true sympathy, and yet it comes not. You may tread a very solitary path, though often in a crowd; yet be sure there is one Friend, the best and the kindest, who is so near that a sigh, a tear, a desire, a scarcely uttered word, cannot be lost. A poor widow was telling of the comfort she had found after the loss of her husband. "The Lord Jesus is so near me," she would say, "that it seems as if I can almost see Him walking by my side on the stairs as I go to rest at night." Here is the "Real Presence" about which so many mis-

takes are often made. It is the presence of Christ made very real to the soul by the light of the Holy Spirit. It is the presence of a living Christ with us at all seasons, cheering and upholding the soul, and supplying the lack of earthly friends and relations.

But how may the Christian thus realize the presence of Christ with him? How may you constantly gain the support and consolation which this truth imparts?

(1.) You must rest with unwavering confidence on the atoning sacrifice Christ made on the cross. Nothing so hinders the joy of Christ's presence as guilt remaining on the conscience. It creates a barrier between the soul and the Saviour. It is a dark cloud shutting out the light of His countenance. Watch against this evil. When sin has been committed, acknowledge it at once, and fly to the shelter of the Cross. The words of one of our Collects teach the lesson we need: "That we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit," *i.e.* the benefit of His sacrifice. Day by day, hour by hour, receive most thankfully the unspeakable benefit of free,

present, and complete remission of every sin. Thus walking with a clear conscience, you will rejoice to be looking up to Him who is ever by your side.

(2.) Be careful in everything, small and great, to please the Lord and do His will. If there be the least wilful disobedience, if you slight the rebuke of conscience in matters of speech or temper or spirit, you will feel a strangeness, a separation, rising between you and the Master. But if you are careful to listen to His voice, and to obey its faintest whispers, if you look out for intimations of His will and are ready to deny yourself to fulfil it, this will draw you nearer to Him. If you "keep His sayings," He will manifest Himself to you. He will make His Presence a felt reality, and you will see Him walking and abiding with you.

(3.) By the grace of the Holy Spirit, cultivate the habit of living, acting, and speaking as in His Presence. Mighty is the power of an evil habit of any kind. No less mighty is the power of a holy habit such as this. When you rise from your bed in the morning, say to the Master, "When I awake I am still with Thee." When

you go to rest say, "I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." When surrounded by friends or full of life's work, say in your heart, "Thou art near, O Lord;" "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." When waves of trouble surround you, hear the Master's voice, "It is I: be not afraid." When the closing hour draws near, still here is your strength and consolation, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."

Thus, while life lasts, the Saviour's Presence will become more and more the greatest reality in your existence. When it closes, in His presence you will depart in peace and hope, and hereafter that Presence will be your everlasting joy.

CHRIST THE COMING JUDGE.

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CHRIST THE COMING JUDGE.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is;* but exhorting *one another:* and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—*Heb.* x. 25.

THOUGH Advent, with its dominating thought that Christ is the Coming Judge, belongs to the Christian year, and not to the Civil Calendar, the two reckonings of time have points in common, both of history and of significance. The civil reckoning is a mere method of marking time; the Church in her seasons interprets it. What the Church learned early, she taught early; what she learned more slowly she more slowly impressed upon the convictions of the world. Of this we have an illustration in the fact that Advent, as a season, came late into observance; and it was long after that before the words *Anno Domini*, prefixed to every almanac, bore witness to the fact that the coming of Christ to judgment in the

end of history had been impressed upon the conviction of the world.

The solemn and significant words *Anno Domini* did not consecrate the civil calendar for many centuries after the first coming of the Lord. The Christian era, as it is called, was not even suggested till the sixth century. It is not universal in Christendom even yet. It represents to us the conviction that slowly conquered the intellect of the world, that the first coming of our Lord is the chief fact in the secular history of mankind.

The sense of the solemnity of life, as well as of the significance of history, grows with time. The life of the world is in that respect like the life of a man.

And the twofold ever-deepening lesson of time is this, that life is not ours to spend as we please; it is not ours to spend without a law of spending. No faculty of mind or body is supreme. We cannot, without deep inward hurt and damage, call aught that we possess our own.

We begin with one authority and end with another, for authority, like Jacob's ladder, has

its foot on earth and its top in heaven. We begin with one Father and end with another. Law and love move with us all life through. Not law only, but law and love; not love only, but love and law. Faithfulness to law heightens the enjoyment of love. Disobedience to law lowers it. The nursery, the school-room, the fireside, law and love are there. So are they in the many mansions above. Our temporary home, the home of our childhood, and our "eternal home," of which we sing at funerals, the same law and the same love brighten and bless them both.

But, oh! this middle life of our chief activity the life of most of us here below; that part of our life most completely in our own control; when our step is proud, and our will is free, and our way is open, and no one, as parents and schoolmasters once did, can call us to account. We are spending it, that is plain, whatever calendar we use. All calendars alike show that. The dial-plate of the great clock of life shows that the slow hour-hand has crept up one more space. The hours, the years pass, and perhaps perish, but they are counted,

examined, reckoned, valued. They give up their story one by one, not to us only, for they are not, they never were ours alone; there is a law for the spending of life; a Law-giver who gave that law; a Judge who will vindicate it. Advent is full of the approach to judgment of "God the Judge of all." We "have come to Him," and lo! at last we feel that He is coming to us.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." Let us bear that in mind as we think of God the Judge of all. God the Son, Jesus Christ *our Lord*, who came not to judge the world but to save the world, comes at last not to save it but to judge it.

And it is to His coming that all things tend and move. More and more, thoughtful men see that; and, "so much the more as they see" that, does their life become earnest, useful, wise, and good. "The" day, "the great day," "the last day," "that day," so does the Bible speak of it; and it is plain that in these simple words, so measured, yet so full of awe, the wisdom of God adapts His language to the feelings and faculties which He has placed within us.

The appeal for increasing vigilance "so much the more" as we "see the day approaching," speaks to us as it does, because of this principle. Its voice was, is, a warning voice; but the power of the warning does not lie in any startling words, it lies in this, that it takes for granted in its calm and measured tone that it has not to announce a new thing, or to surprise us with some portentous appearance, new to all experience, some wonder in the sky, some fearful thing in the city, or the desert, or the secret place. The appeal the text makes is not to things without exclusively, but to things within, or rather to the thoughts, the convictions, the forebodings, the groanings which cannot be uttered which arise within us as the movement of things, the stir, the changes, the conflicts, the fightings, and the fears of men, combine with the ever-recurring judgments of God to convince the awakened conscience, the enlightened judgment, that the day of reckoning draws near, and that more and more we can see it approaching.

There are signs which prove to be no signs, there are prophets who prove to be no prophets,

there are times of dread which come and go, and lo! there is nothing. The baffled interpreter hides his head for awhile, shuffles his materials afresh, predicts again, and is baffled again. It is not for him to know the times and seasons.

It is possible with perfect ease to construct a sorrowful list of times when men saw or thought they saw the day approaching. They were not always wrong. The warning appeal to the Hebrews had its meaning in the days when it was written. It had its meaning for the people who first read it as their epistle, a meaning which was theirs alone. It is not in the power of language to be more significant, more vivid, to point with a more solemn finger to a real, all but contemporary, event. The verbs, the participles, are a figure of the times then present. Those Hebrews saw the things happen of which the Lord Himself had forewarned them. Jerusalem was the centre of their moral landscape, that is certain; that it was the centre of their real landscape, that is, that they themselves lived there, is the opinion of some. But doubtful points may be put aside, that we may deal with certainties only. These Hebrews could "see

the day approaching." The storm was gathering before their eyes. It was to burst upon the Holy City; it did so break and burst, and then the end, which yet was not "the" end, came; the day, which yet was not "the" day; the judgment, which yet was not "the" judgment; the fulfilment, which yet left so much to be fulfilled.

Such anticipations of "the" day are in God's order, they are self-interpreting, they (for the catastrophe of Jerusalem is not alone in history) are full of lasting lessons. They leave their mark upon the souls of men. By the awful light of these tremendous overthrows we learn how to scan the sky, to watch for the crimson dawn of "the" day when days shall be no more.

Let us examine a contrasting instance of a sign that was no sign, of an interpretation that was no interpretation, of an announcement of the day of the Lord that mocked the hopes and trifled with the fears of men.

A terror arose in the tenth century, ripening rapidly into a panic, that the "end of the world" was near at hand. It was founded, not upon moral signs, not upon providential indi-

cations; indeed, one great woe that had afflicted men,—the Arabian conquests in Europe,—had lost its sting; but certain interpreters of the Bible had laid it down that the Millennium began with the Incarnation, and that therefore it was drawing to its close. The loosing of Satan, the manifestation of Antichrist, the day of doom itself were, they said, at the doors.

"Breathless crowds," we read, "listened to the awful message; and the belief spread from village to village, from town to town." There were no signs that the day was approaching; but the dreadful apprehension was a sufficient sign to itself. Panic needs no signs. And sin, abounding sin, sin indulged, souls neglected, Christ despised, warnings set aside, all these, under favouring conditions, lead to panics and paroxysms, and to idle cries to rocks and hills. Multitudes, says the historian, "multitudes innumerable, having given their property to monasteries or churches, travelled to Palestine, where they expected Christ to descend to judgment." Buildings went to decay, as things of which there would be no more need; and the few chronicles of the time are fewer than they might

have been, since it would be, men argued, but lost labour to write them.

But the last year of the last century of that millennium came and went, and nothing happened. So the panic died away.

Such interpretations are, we are sure, not in God's order. The hours of God, the days of God, the years of God, are almost always moral and symbolical rather than chronological. They are hours which diligence can hasten ; they are days which unbelief can prolong. The spirit of the living creature which Ezekiel saw was in the wheels. They advanced, they retreated, they turned not as they went.

So it is with Him whose glory is foreshadowed in the vision which the prophet saw. We cannot predict the time of His nearer approach to the ways which are our ways ; we cannot predict the time of His withdrawal within the ways which are not our ways. But His approaches reveal themselves to His watchful people, and rouse them to prepare to meet Him.

That watchful spirit admits of keener exercise, of clearer discernment ; it stirs us to a better common life ; it speaks to us, not as individuals,

as if approaching calamity had dissolved the bands of a common interest in each other's welfare; it speaks to us, let us mark it well, of a common hope, of something which shall be more to each, because it is more to all. It is something which gains, not loses, by the largest joint ownership, or, to use a figure of high authority and interest, it flashes its brightness from soul to soul, as mirrors placed opposite each other reflect each other's light.

It is a trial, it will be a fiery trial, that day which ye see approaching, but so much the more as ye see it draw near, so much the more draw ye near each to another. The day of the Lord is a great gathering day, it is the day of the coming of "our Lord Jesus Christ and of our gathering together unto Him."

"So much the more as ye see the day approaching." The power of the appeal, as I have pointed out, lies in the calm certainty which it implies that the day is approaching, and that there are eyes that with increasing clearness can see it approaching.

We need not then dwell even for a moment upon that which every anniversary, every re-

turning season teaches, the lesson of the flight of time; the bare reminder that each reader is a year nearer to the great reckoning than he was when Advent was with us last. It is not that, true as it is, and to the sensitive of us, touching as well as true, which the message teaches.

It points to two things, one outside us, and one within. It sets us upon a mount of vision, and bids us see tower, and town, and fenced wall. The land is full of silver and gold; cedar of Lebanon is there, and oak from Bashan; mighty men are there, men of war, judges, counsellors, cunning artificers, and eloquent orators. These may be, they *need* not be, but these have been in other days hostile to God, and hostile to His people. Orators, senators, captains, proconsuls, cunning artificers, and shrine makers—who that knows the story, ever so little, of early Christianity, does not know how they behaved to the disciples of Jesus Christ? Stephen and then James, who did not escape; Peter and then Paul, who both,—but only for a time,—did escape; these were but the chief of many who had been made a gazingstock by

afflictions and reproaches for Christ's sake, when this epistle was written. And the writer does not deceive, he does not promise that such days shall not return. He says they will return. He bids his brethren look at the gathering clouds that indicate a fresh outburst. It is a fearful thing, he says, to fall short of courage, "to shrink back." He bids them live over again in remembrance those former days, and gather from them the courage to fill up the appointed measure of persecution.

But the persecutors, what of these? Or if persecutors are done with, what of the powers that take their place? The day of the Lord is upon them. Upon kings and kingdoms, presidents and republics, demagogues and agitators, upon popes, upon bishops, upon the clergy and ministers of all denominations. More and more we see the day approaching which severs for ever between the precious and the vile of these.

We see it in special examples of failure, drawn out of darkness into light. We see it in the collapse of great reputations, in the destruction as in a moment of great public careers. We see it, sooner or later, whenever and wherever power,

or place, or privilege are used in the spirit of selfishness, and not for the good of men.

We see it in the barrenness that blights mere brains, in the judgment of God, which lights upon those who quench—all they can—men's faith in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Not theirs is the empire over souls. Nor is it theirs, nor will it ever be theirs, who appeal to the worst side of men, who lower their moral tone, who flatter them, who use the instrument of a foolish shepherd, and make godliness impossible by destroying moral law.

For we see approaching the day that shall burn as an oven, the day that shall be revealed with fire, we see the approach of the refiner, the fuller, the winnowing fan, the two-edged sword that cuts between the soul and spirit. We see a pair of balances into which no false weights are put, we see, finally, the books opened in which nothing is overstated and nothing is forgot.

These things are visible, as the sun in the sky. Do we see them? do we see them approaching? does the sight of their approach work mightily within us?

Does the thought of these eternal judgments support us in what to us is the balancing trial set in our days over against persecution in the early days, against false and flattering estimates of ourselves, against inward deep dishonesty of soul, that shirks frank self-investigation and is tempted to take refuge in the belief that there is no judgment at all?

If we would judge ourselves, we should take half the terror and all the peril out of the great day.

Yes, there is a law of spending, as there is a life to spend. No faculty of mind or body is supreme or irresponsible. The broad arrow of redemption is upon every limb of the body, upon every energy of the soul.

Maranatha, the Lord cometh, the day draweth nigh. Be not afraid. Let it come, even if it come in fire :—

> "What lives by life that is not Thine,
> I yield it to Thy righteous doom;
> What yet resists Thy power Divine,
> Oh, let Thy fire of love consume."

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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